Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/sabbathschoolbib0000jame

THE

SABBATH SCHOOL

AND

BIBLE TEACHING.

By JAMES INGLIS.

REVISED BY DANIEL P. KIDDER.

New-York:
PUBLISHED BY LANE & SCOTT,
FOR THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
200 Mulberry-street.
JOSEPH LONGKING, PRINTER.
1851.

Theology L[illegible]
SCHOOL OF THEOL[illegible]
AT CLAREMON[illegible]
California

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

We take pleasure in presenting the following work to the American public. It made its first appearance the present year in Edinburgh.

It is an original and thoroughly elaborated treatise; such as does high credit to its author, as possessing a clear and practical mind in connection with a warm, Christian heart. In publishing the Sunday-School Teacher's Guide, in 1845, we advanced the opinion that much had yet to be written on the subject of Sunday-school teaching, before the work would be as well understood, and the enterprise as far advanced, as it ought to be. Since that period we have published a valuable series of Tracts illustrating numerous topics connected with the position and duties of teachers; and we are now gratified in being able to place on our list of

publications of this character, the present essay from an intelligent Sunday-school laborer in Scotland.

In our revision we have found it necessary to omit certain local allusions, and to make various changes in phraseology, and occasionally in sentiment, to adapt the work more fully to American use. Notwithstanding this, the origin and special design of the work will be apparent. Although we do not deem it necessary to endorse every minor opinion or direction the volume may contain, still we can cheerfully commend it, on the whole, as one of the best that has appeared on the subject. We cordially wish that it may sooner or later find its way to the library of every Sunday-school, and the hands of every teacher in the Western hemisphere; that its pages may be read, its spirit imbibed, and its directions followed.

New-York, September, 1850.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE aim of the Author, in the present work, is to supply Sabbath-school Teachers with a practical guide to the mode of teaching and conducting a Sabbath-school. He has endeavored to exhibit the general principles of teaching—to show by detailed examples their application to the different branches of religious instruction—to point out prevailing errors, and offer suggestions by which they may be rectified—and to furnish directions for the more efficient management of the Sabbath-school.

CONTENTS.

Page

INTRODUCTION—Importance of Early Religious Instruction.... 11

ON TEACHING.

Page

ON SYSTEMS OF TEACHING. 15

PREPARATION—
Extempore Teaching..... 18
Its Evils—
1. Vagueness..... 18
2. Superficiality..... 20
3. Untextual Teaching.... 22
Directions to Inexperienced Teachers..... 22
How to Study—
1. The Subject..... 23
2. The Plan..... 24
3. The Materials..... 27

EXPLANATION—
Its Necessity—
1. The Bible..... 29
2. Catechisms..... 30
3. Children's Errors..... 30
Directions—
1. Simplicity..... 32
2. Examination..... 32
3. Paraphrase..... 32
4. Progressive Explanation 33
5. Wandering..... 33

ILLUSTRATION—
Its Nature and Value..... 35
Intellectual Teaching..... 35
Illustration Exemplified.... 36
Directions—
1. Adaptation..... 41
2. Simplicity..... 42
3. Variety..... 42
4. Minuteness..... 43
5. Parallel Texts..... 44
6. Historical Examples.... 44
7. Imaginative Illustrations 44
8. Language..... 49

APPLICATION—
Its Nature and Value..... 51
1. On Practical Religion.. 53
2. On Conviction..... 55
3. On Conversion..... 57
4. The Connection between Instruction and Application..... 57
5. The Relation of Application to the Lesson.... 59
6. Personal Appeals..... 60
Evils of Teaching by Rote.. 61

REVISION—
Its Importance..... 64
What is to be Revised—
1. Tasks..... 65
2. Outlines of Lessons.... 65
3. Outlines of History.... 66
4. Summaries..... 67

CATECHISING—
I. Uses—
1. Attention..... 68
2. The Memory..... 68
3. Permanency..... 69
4. Index to the Mind..... 69
5. Mental Discipline..... 69
II. Elliptical Catechising—
1. The Ellipsis..... 70
2. Where it should occur.. 70
3. The Voice..... 70
4. Word or Clause..... 70
5. The Answers..... 70

Page

CATECHISING—*continued.*
III. Direct Catechising—
Rules regarding—
1. Drawing Lessons 71
2. Introduction 72
3. First Question 72
4. Connection 73
5. Simplicity 74
6. Trifling Questions 75
7. Leading Questions 76
8. Uniformity 77
9. The form of Question .. 77
10. Scripture Language ... 77
11. Manner 78
12. Freedom 78
13. Guessing 78
14. Partiality 78
15. The Name of the Scholar 79
16. Irregular Questions ... 79
17. Inattention 79
18. Use of a Book 79
19. Exclamations 79
20. Repetition 80
21. Commendation 80
22. Liveliness 80
23. Ladies' Manner 81
24. Encouragement 81
Difficulties Answered—
1. Friendliness 81
2. Simplicity 82
3. Obstinacy 82

BIBLE HISTORY—
Its Uses—
1. Its Moral Lessons 83
2. Its Moral Influence 83
3. Foundation of Faith 85
Directions—
1. Miscellaneous Subjects . 85
2. Geography 85
3. Chronology 86
4. The Narrative 89
5. The Moral 91
6. Inferences 93
Cautions.—
Spiritualizing 95
Types 96
Proportion 96
Lessons 97
The Cross 97

Page

PARABLES—
Directions—
1. The Story 98
2. The Subject-Matter 98
3. The Topics 93
4. Minutiæ 99
Similes and Metaphors 100

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.
I. The Law. Mistakes ... 100
Directions—
1. Laws of God 101
2. The Reason and Affections 101
3. Plainness 102
4. Particularity 102
5. Sanctions 103
6. Enforcements 104
II. The Gospel.
Directions—
1. The Cross 104
2. Motives 104
3. Teaching and Training 106
4. Style of Language 106
5. Completeness 107

CATECHISMS—
Their Popularity 109
Their Nature 110
How to Teach them Popularly 111
————Theologically ... 112
Theological Catechisms
Uninteresting 115
Want Moral Influence 115
Difficult to Explain .. 117
Questions Learned by Rote 121

READING—
On Correctness and Fluency 123
Pronunciation 123
Imperfect Reading 123
The Teacher's Example .. 123

COMMITTING TO MEMORY—
Its Value 124
Errors 124
What should be Learned .. 125
Oral Teaching 127
Thorough Examining ... 127

	Page
INFANT CLASSES—	
Their Importance	129
1. Children's Sins	129
2. Children's Capacity	129
3. Early Death	130
Directions Regarding—	
1. Rooms	130
2. Exercises	130
3. Narratives	130
4. Use of Narratives	131
5. Conversational manner	131
6. Repetition	131
7. Simultaneous Answers	132
8. Authority	132
9. Short Sentences	132
10. Duration of Meeting	132
11. Volatility	132
SENIOR CLASSES—	
Their Number	133
Difficulties—	
1. Misconceptions	133
2. Sense of Independence	134
3. Disinclination to Religion	134
4. Want of Good Teachers	135
Means of Multiplying them—	
1. The Church	135
2. Minister's Classes	135
3. Good Teachers	135
4. Separate Rooms	136
5. Good Junior Classes	136
Mode of Teaching them—	
1. Intellectual Teaching	137
2. Duty to the World	140
3. Books	140
General Directions	141
ENCOURAGEMENTS—	
Teacher's Trials	143
Teaching always Useful	143
Success not always Known	147
———Is in Proportion to Exertion	147

THE SCHOOL.

	Page
THE SUPERINTENDENT—	
Directions regarding—	
1. Organization	150
2. Government	150
3. Addressing	152
4. Registers of Scholars	153
5. Choice of Superintendent	153
THE TEACHERS—	
I. Qualifications	155
II. The Choice of Teachers	157
III. Recommendations regarding—	
1. Moral Cultivation	159
2. Study of Character	160
3. Manner	161
4. Lecturing	162
5. Farewell Letters	163
6. Regularity	163
7. Perseverance	164
8. Prayer	165
MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL—	
Business of School—	
1. Time of Meeting	166
2. Duration of Meeting	166
3. Praise	166
4. Prayer	167
5. Lessons	168
6. Closing Exercises	169
7. Missionary Society	169
8. Dismission of Scholars	170
Roll-Books—	
1. General Register	171
2. Minute Books	172
3. Teacher's Roll-book	172
Arrangement and Classification—	
1. The Seats	173
2. Boys and Girls	174
3. Age and Education	174
4. Size of the Classes	177
5. Size of School	177
Order—	
1. Punctuality	179

Page

MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL—*continued.*
Order—
2. Mode of preventing Misbehavior 180
3. Unexpected Threats... 180
4. Improper Threats..... 181
5. Firmness 181
6. Visitation..... 181
7. Good Teaching..... 182
Rewards—their Merits and Demerits..... 182
Punishments—
1. Reproof 184
2. Expulsion..... 186
Personal Chastisement.... 187
The Library—
1. Religious Biography .. 188
2. Historical Works 189
3. Missionary Works 189
4. Miscellaneous Works.. 189
5. Its Religious Character 190
6. The Librarian..... 190
7. Good Book-keeping ... 190
8. Terms..... 191
9. Books for Teachers.... 191
Visiting—
1. Absentees..... 192
2. The Sick 194
3. Periodical Visitation .. 195
Uses of Visitation 198

ENGLISH AND IRISH SABBATH-SCHOOLS 202
Recommendations for their Improvement 202

Page

SCOTTISH SABBATH-SCHOOLS—
Recommendations for improving them..... 204

CONGREGATIONAL SABBATH-SCHOOLS—
Their Value..... 207
The Minister's Connection with them 209

HOME MISSIONARY SCHOOLS—
Mode of Conducting a City Mission 213
Mode of Conducting a Missionary School..... 215
1. The Teachers 215
2. The Choice of a District 215
3. The School-room 216
4. On Canvassing for Scholars..... 216
5. The Size of Classes ... 217
6. Maintenance of Order . 217
7. Visitation of Absentees. 218
8. School Books 218
9. Week-evening Classes . 218
10. Tidiness among Children 219
11. Politeness..... 219
12. Sick and Clothing Society..... 219
Need of Missionary Schools—
1. Attendance on Schools 219
2. Church Attendance ... 220
3. Ignorance of Children . 220
4. Amount of Crime..... 221
5. Resources of the Church 221
Conclusion 224

INTRODUCTION.

The Sabbath-school is one of the most important religious institutions of the age. As a means of educating a large portion of the rising generation—of cultivating habits of order and obedience—of uniting together by offices of good-will the different classes of society, and of calling forth a large amount of self-denial, perseverance, and Christian principle, it is entitled to a high place. But it has still higher claims on the Church and the world. It is one of the most efficient means of extending the kingdom of Christ. Many thousands have been rescued by its instrumentality from the dominion of sin; and it is now rearing numerous plants which shall one day bloom in the paradise of God. The *religious* aspect of the Sabbath-school, therefore, ought principally to engage our attention. Let us notice some of its more striking features.

1. It must be recollected that the children who attend our schools are all *immortal beings*. In every child we see

> "A new-born germ
> From which may spring an angel."

The humblest child in our schools is to live forever. From hands mightier than man's he has received the awful privilege of immortality. His bark has been launched on a shoreless sea; and the teacher is to be his pilot to purer

skies and calmer waters than are to be seen in this troubled world.

Let the teacher, then, forget both the ragged and the gay garment; let him look beyond the rosy cheek of the happy child, and the fierce eye of one of life's outcasts. There is an immortal spirit in that youthful form; that eye is to look on other stars than those which gem our sky; that tongue to speak a language which mortal man has never dreamed of; and that heart to throb with life when the world's history shall be but a leaf in the book of eternity. Eternal issues hang on every Sabbath's instructions. Woe to the teacher who betrays his trust.

2. All children are *sinners*. We may not believe that a child is a fair flower, fresh as in Eden's perfection it was planted by the hand of God, and that all we have to do is, with hands washed in innocency, to train it to open its beauties to the sun. Who would not wish to believe this, were it true? Alas! it is not true. However early we begin our instructions, we find that sin has been before us. Anger, envy, selfishness, are bound up in the heart of every child. We are not seeking in teaching it to preserve a pure soul from pollution, or to ward off a distant danger; guilt is already on the child's head, and a mortal disease preying on its heart; its own way is very sweet, and the way of God very hard.

3. Religion does not leave children to perish in their sins; its teachers are ministers of peace to them. Christ Jesus died to save children.—Of such is the kingdom of heaven. The fold of the good Shepherd has lambs as well as sheep; and He who suffered the little children, and forbade them not, to come to Him on earth, has often welcomed them to

heaven. To children, therefore, *as children*, we must teach the gospel. They need no more sins or years to give them a claim on God's mercy. The youngest is old enough, and guilty enough already; and the gospel provides *present remedies* for their *present wants*.

4. It is very much in the teacher's favor that he has *young minds* to instruct. He stands, as it were, near the point where the broad and the narrow way part; ere much of either has been trodden, or the children's feet have become familiar to the path. Let the teacher improve his opportunity. The period of youth cannot be retained. The sapling will soon be a hard and knotted trunk; the rill of passion, an impetuous torrent; the soft, impressible sand, impenetrable rock. It is when the *child* is trained in the way he should go that he will not depart from it.

From the importance of the truths taught in the Sabbath-school, and the value of the interests at stake, we see at once the principle on which all its arrangements are to be made. Are children immortal and guilty, and is there salvation provided for them? Then our only business in the school is to draw them to God. Whatever plans we adopt, whatever arrangements we make, and whatever lessons we teach, must have this object directly in view. We should never hear a child repeat a hymn, or read a passage of Scripture; we should neither require a scholar to prove a doctrine, nor examine him on what we have taught, but for the purpose, in one way or another, of advancing his eternal interests. A teacher does not go to the school to spend an hour in hearing lessons, but, as in the sight of God, to show to his pupils the way to eternal life.

Were this high object ever kept in view, what an energy

would be infused into our Sabbath-schools; with what earnestness should we proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ; what solemn appeals should we address to those who are living in sin; and how would the most trifling arrangements acquire a dignity, because seen in their relation to eternity!

The present work is divided into two Parts. The first Part is occupied with RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, which is discussed under the heads Preparation, Explanation, Illustration, Application, Revision, Catechising, Bible History, Parables, the Law and the Gospel, and Catechisms, &c. The second Part is dedicated to THE SCHOOL, under which are considered rules for its formation, management, and improvement.

THE

SABBATH-SCHOOL AND BIBLE TEACHING.

ON TEACHING.

When a person makes the inquiry, What is the best system of teaching? he naturally expects to have a well-organized plan of instruction laid before him, which he has only to adopt to be successful at once. Various writers have endeavored to answer the inquiry in this very way. Accordingly we have the systems of Pestalozzi, Gall, Stowe, and the Catechisms, each embodying one or more great principles, but none of them embracing all. The great drawback on all such systems is their *exclusiveness*. They exaggerate the value of the one principle they embody, and in doing so look slightingly on other principles perhaps equally valuable.

There is also a temptation in the teacher who adopts them to be diverted from the end to the means; and to ask how he shall teach his lesson by his particular mode, rather than how he shall do most good to his pupils.

A teacher who depends upon *system*, forgets one or two very important principles in teaching.

1. He forgets that the true use of a good mode of instruction is, not to save the teacher labor, but to make his labor more productive; not to give him ease, but the scholars more profit. It is not to allow him to sit with folded hands, because by his superior mode he can do as

much as those who are straining every nerve; but to enable him to direct his own efforts more successfully. The sharper a weapon is, it must not only cut more easily, but *deeper*.

2. There is not any *one* pre-eminent mode of communicating knowledge. There are general principles which must ever be acted on in all teaching, but they will receive an infinite variety of modifications and combinations, according to circumstances. A teacher should always be simple, intelligent, and earnest; but these three qualities will receive a new shape according to the nature of the lesson, and the disposition of the pupil. We cannot teach history and doctrine precisely in the same way. A child of six and one of sixteen must have very different treatment. One teacher is very successful who is totally destitute of imagination; another's forte is illustration.

3. More depends on the *spirit* than the *mode* of instruction. In mechanics we see the most surprising results from the combination of forces; a child may raise a weight that ten men could not move. And something, doubtless, may be accomplished in teaching by the use of a good method; for every obstruction in the channel, by retarding, breaks the force with which the ideas are impelled on the mind. But the influence of method has narrow bounds. It is to the *life* of the lessons—the contact of mind with mind—that we must look for success. A good writer will write better with a bad pen, than a bad writer with a good pen; and a mind full of its subject, and earnest in communicating its thoughts, is to be prized above any measure of mere mechanical dexterity.

Some readers may be slow in believing this. They have gone into a school where the training system prevails; and marking the interest the scholars take in the lessons, their intelligence, and the liveliness of their replies, they have exclaimed, "Here at length have we found a perfect system. Could we only learn this method we should be above

difficulty." Whereas, to the talent of the teacher, rather than to the peculiarity of the machinery, may the success be attributed. For system does not *create* thought; it merely furnishes a channel for its communication. *Any* method, therefore, which allows full play to the faculties will be successful; but the very best method, if there is a deficiency in the quality of thought, must fail. That mode of teaching must be signally at fault, which can reduce the efficacy of valuable thought to the level of even well-taught commonplace.

We have no great expectation of there being very much better teachers in the future than there have been in the past, though we believe that the number of *indifferent* teachers may be very much lessened, and the number of superior teachers greatly increased. We shall have improvements in the management of schools, and some of the systems which have fettered the minds of teachers will be laid aside; but we are not to look for great advances in the art of convincing and persuading.

There is indefinite progress in the arts and sciences, because each new inquirer trades on the discoveries or inventions of his predecessor; but the religious instruction communicated to a child in our own day, consists of the very same things that have been taught to children from the first; and the mode of teaching them is substantially the same. To illustrate important truth—to bewitch with the graces of style and fancy—to carry the reason a willing captive—to fire the imagination—to enthrall the heart—to prove to a child that he is a sinner—to set before him Christ Jesus crucified, and to teach him what is the law of his God—these have all been done as well as we are ever likely to see them done, and these are the great departments of a teacher's work.

We would therefore throw back a teacher, as far as human instrumentality is concerned, on the resources of his own mind. As the lightning, though running most readily

along its conductor, will, if powerful, force its way through every obstacle; so, if a teacher's mind is charged with thought, and he is determined to impart it, he cannot fail to find means of doing so. His method may not be a common one, nor the best in itself, but every difficulty will disappear before the resolute will.

We do not intend in this work to advocate any of the popular systems of teaching, or to advance one of our own, but to illustrate the principles inherent in all good teaching. The first to which we direct attention is the preparation of the lesson.

PREPARATION.

No teacher, whatever may be his talents or acquirements, even though long practice has made him familiar with the Bible, and given him facility in expressing his ideas, ought to neglect the study of his weekly lessons. The wisest man has much to learn from the wisdom of the Bible; and the most skillful teacher will be the first to confess that he knows but little as he ought to know, of the way of winning souls.

Extempore teaching is, we believe, far from being uncommon. Some excuse for it is to be found in the circumstances of the teachers. Their limited means of procuring books, and their still more limited time for perusing them, prevent them from making their preparation so thorough as the importance of their duties would require. But after making sufficient allowances for these adverse circumstances, we fear there is a large amount of blame resting on teachers. Instead of solemnly setting apart a portion of their leisure hours for the examination of their lesson, and taking advantage of all the helps which they have at command, some trust to their fluency, others to the information they can collect at the teachers' meeting, and others give very little attention to the subject.

4. The model after which he is to run.—Looking to Jesus.

5. The motives which should cheer him.—He is compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses.

It is to be observed that these plans or outlines are not intended to be an artificial frame-work into which the different parts of the lesson are to be violently forced; they are the real frame-work, separated from the incidents appended to them; and until a person rightly unwinds what may be called the clue of thought, he cannot teach any passage of Scripture in its entireness.

When a plan like the above has been sketched, the teacher has a clear channel in which his thoughts may run. He knows not only the main lesson, but the steps by which he is to reach it; and instead of teaching in the dark, he teaches intelligently.

III. The next step is to provide sufficient materials for illustrating the lesson. It must be a principal care of the teacher to make his instructions *substantial*. Good thought is the basis of good teaching. Knowledge is the food of the soul, and is equally necessary for children as for adults, though it may be differently prepared. Many teachers starve their scholars from underrating their capacities. A lesson should be thoroughly studied, its difficulties solved, its great truths grappled with, and such parallel texts, historical examples, or illustrations of any sort, sought out as shall enable us to teach it vividly. All our materials should be ranged under their respective heads, and carefully conned over until the teacher is familiar with them, so that his texts and illustrations shall spontaneously present themselves when required, as the parties in a procession silently assume their places when every one knows his turn. It is a great matter to have one's tools in good order. A story should be told with spirit, and a text quoted accurately, fluently, and at the right place.

We recommend teachers not to delay the examination of their lessons till the end of the week, lest they study them

hurriedly and superficially. When we study the Bible, we should always ask, what it says to *ourselves.*

The difficulty may be suggested, that though a plan of teaching be drawn out, yet, from the ignorance, stupidity, or willfulness of the children, it cannot be followed. We find one child who refuses to answer our questions, and another who gives an entirely wrong answer, and we are obliged to step aside to accommodate ourselves to their circumstances. To a certain extent this difficulty must be admitted; but if there is so much temptation to stray from the passage, is there not the more need for a guide through it? Our outline need not be so inflexible as to refuse to bend to the necessities of the scholars; but neither must the teacher be so facile as to yield to every interruption to his thoughts. He must bear himself like a man passing along a crowded street, who is forced now to incline to the right, and now to the left, but who resolutely pushes his way to his destination. A little practice will teach the scholars to follow his line of thought, which is preferable to the teacher following theirs.

A well-thought, well-arranged lesson, possesses very many advantages over an extempore lesson. It is much richer in material, and much deeper in sentiment. No time is wasted in observations foreign to the subject. The orderly manner in which the particulars are ranged makes them memorable, and, above all, the lesson possesses unity. Union is power, both in the world of matter and in the world of mind. When a number of soldiers march over a suspension bridge, lest the bridge should be brought down by their tread, they are obliged to be put off step; yet how trifling the effect of the footsteps of a single soldier. This proves the force of united action. So, when all the divisions, texts, and illustrations are marshaled in regular order, their moral power must be proportionably great.

The preparation over, let us now view the teacher with his class. His first step is to explain the lesson.

EXPLANATION.

An explanation of the difficulties of the lesson, is the first thing to which the teacher must give his attention in commencing his instructions. Unless the language in which the instruction is conveyed be perfectly intelligible, the instruction itself cannot be understood. A teacher must, therefore, note such peculiarities as are likely to require elucidation, ascertain the amount of his pupil's knowledge in regard to them, and supply whatever is defective. What is to be aimed at is, to give a child a perfect understanding of what he reads and repeats; such an understanding of it as shall enable him to say, Now I know exactly what this passage means. The diction of the Bible and of religion must be made so transparent, that the precious pearl of truth which it contains may be seen with open eye.

The amount of care required in this preliminary branch of instruction, is much greater than would at first sight be believed.

1. In the first place, a large portion of the *Bible* requires to be explained before it can be understood. In the following verse, for example, every clause requires some comment. 1st Kings xiii, 1, "And behold there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel; and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense." Here the words, a man of God—Judah—the word of the Lord—Bethel—Jeroboam—altar—and incense, demand investigation.

In the dwellings, dress, manner of living, and customs of the Jews, is found abundant room for minute explanation. Thus, when we come to the words "the month Nisan," we must inform the scholars that this was the first month of the Jewish year, and corresponded with our April.

Or, they read that a book was "written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals," and must be told that the Jewish books resembled our large school maps.

Again, they find that Peter was praying on the house-top, or that Jesus commanded a man to take up his bed and walk. Both of these peculiarities will be understood when they know the manner in which the Jews built their houses; and how different their couches were from our beds.

Or, finally, they read in Matthew xxiii, 35, the words, "that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias." The reference to Abel and Zacharias we should explain, by saying, that in the Hebrew Bible, Genesis is placed first, and Chronicles last; and that Abel's murder being the first mentioned in the one, and Zacharias' the last in the other, all between are included.

2. There are many current words of divinity in religious works and catechisms which must be explained. We are hazarding nothing in affirming that one-half of those in common use are not understood. A person we once met in a railway-carriage, speaking of the freedom of the will, stated, that like all the other gifts of Providence, some had more, and some had less. "Bonaparte, for instance," he said, "though an emperor, could not keep his wife from running into debt with her milliner. Do you call *that* freedom of the will?" Nothing could convince this man that freedom of *willing* and of *acting* were two very different things. Of the meaning of a number of theological terms in common use, many adults, as well as children, are as ignorant as this individual was of the meaning of "freedom of the will."

3. Children are extremely disposed to adopt interpretations of their own, when a correct account is not furnished to them, and these interpretations are often alike unexpected and ludicrous. Every teacher's experience will supply him with proofs of this observation. Words which we supposed every person must know the meaning of, they have not understood in the least; and their notions about

others are very remote from the truth. We found a class of girls unacquainted with the meaning of the simple words *hoary* head. They were surprised to find they meant a *white* head. A boy being asked what hardship meant, said, an *iron*-ship. A child thought that when Moses lay among the *flags*, he lay among *paving-stones*. Another, in an infant school, when asked to mention some articles sold by measure—his teacher meaning such things as milk or molasses—called out, Boots and shoes are sold by measure. "Mamma, I am choking! I am choking!" a little boy cried out one night to his mother, in a very clear, loud voice. His mother heard from the tone that he could not be in great danger, but went to see what was the matter. On asking where he was choking, he pointed to his *wrist*, on which the sleeve was too tight. A boy reading his lesson at school, came to the word *cat*, which, after deliberately spelling c, a, t, he pronounced *puss;* and, on another occasion, after spelling dress, d, r, e, s, s, he pronounced it *pride*.

We do not think sufficient attention has been given to this department of teaching. Rote teaching is far from being uncommon. Often, where professedly discarded, it is, through carelessness, in actual operation. A teacher will allow a child to think Jordan is a town, and Judea a river, without setting him right; and, though he sees by the manner in which his scholars read the Bible that they attach no ideas to the words they mispronounce, they are suffered to go on uncorrected. Even good teachers are not always careful enough on this point. A boy, in reading the New Testament, came to the words "Scribes and Pharisees," but read instead, "Scribes and Paraphrases." Some teachers would have stopped him, saying, "Pharisees, boy—Pharisees." It was better to pause and explain the difference.

The following are the principal points requiring attention in the explanation of a lesson:—

1. The explanation must be suited to the knowledge the children possess. No principle is more frequently violated than this. Sometimes the explanation is as obscure as the difficulty. Thus, we have seen Saviour explained by Redeemer. A child who did not know what the first meant, was not likely to understand the second. If the steps of a ladder are too wide apart, it were as well away. In Mr. Dunn's Principles of teaching, we have the following anecdote:—"Will you please tell me why I carry one for every ten?" said a child to her instructor. "Yes," replied he, kindly. "It is because numbers increase from right to left in a decimal ratio!" This explanation is harder to be understood than the original difficulty.

At other times, the explanation, in itself good, is not carried far enough back. We have seen, in inquiring our way through a large town, that while the person asked would direct us to every street through which we had to pass, he omitted the way to the first one. We should always go back till we find a link in the child's mind to which we can attach the new information. It does little good, for example, to acquaint a child who had never heard of Judea, that Jerusalem was the capital of Judea. We must inform him first that there was such a country, tell him where it was, and then name its chief city. So also to tell him that a priest was a person who offered sacrifices, would be unintelligible, unless he knew what a sacrifice was. Or were we to say that the publican "stood afar off," because of his humility; the sentence would be no clearer unless the child knew where he stood, and in what way his position and posture were indicative of humility.

2. The scholars should always be examined upon the explanation. They will pay more attention to it when they know that an examination upon it is to follow. By this means, also, the teacher will find an opportunity of correcting what has not been properly comprehended.

3. Abstract terms, and difficult sentences, are best explained by a paraphrase. Thus, instead of formally explaining the word sanctification by giving an equivalent term, it would be better to say, "When a person hates all sin, leads a holy life, and loves God with all his heart, then he is sanctified."

4. The quality of the explanation must keep pace with the acquirements of the scholar. It is well enough for a young child to be told that a synagogue was a sort of church; but, as he grows older, he must be taught the origin of the synagogue, its general appearance, the order of its services, and so on. That an altar was a small erection on which sacrifices were offered, may be enough for a young child to know; but, as he advances, we must teach him that altars were used both for sacrifice and incense; that they were not to be made of hewn stone, lest idolatrous images should be carved on them, &c.; so that with these and other particulars, they may have a very complete conception of the history and uses of altars.

5. *Never wander from a passage in explaining its terms.* This practice is carried to a great length by some teachers, and, indeed, is sanctioned by high names. The word *faith*, for example, occurs in a lesson, and the teacher, instead of making a simple statement of what the word or doctrine means, enters into a discussion of it. Examples of faith are required; it is asked, What is the opposite of faith? Give examples of unbelief. What is the reward of faith? What is the punishment of unbelief? Or the word may be *Jerusalem*, to which are attached a string of questions, about its first capture by David, its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, its rebuilding by Ezra and Nehemiah, and its final ruin by Titus. By this method, the mind is fretted with incessant interruptions, and the unity of the lesson is entirely destroyed. It is as if, in traveling, not contented with inquiring to what places the numerous cross-roads led, we followed them up to their termination, and then re-

sumed our original route. It would be a somewhat tedious journey.

The principle by which an explanation is to be regulated is, *to give as much and no more explanation than is necessary to the understanding of the particular lesson.* Thus, if the lesson were on Luke i, 5–22, and we were explaining the 9th verse, "His lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple;" since our subject is the vision of the angel, and not a history either of sacrifice or of the temple, we briefly tell what offering incense was, and where it was offered, and pass on. We are not to make a separate lesson on the word "temple." In the parable of the Pharisee and publican, (Luke xviii, 10,) the same word "temple" occurs; here its uses as a place of prayer might be *briefly* noticed. But if Matthew xxiv, 1 were the lesson, "His disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple," we would naturally enter upon an account of the past history and present condition of the temple. Let us never diverge from the lesson without a special reason. A child may have enough of information to understand the sentence, "Jesus entered into Capernaum," by being told that Capernaum was a city on the west side of the sea of Galilee, without connecting with it a host of other incidents.

The explanation finished, we must next proceed to the illustration of the lesson. It may be necessary to remark here, that we do not mean that all the explanation shall be finished before commencing the illustration, or that the illustration shall be completed before proceeding to anything else. The different parts of teaching must, on the contrary, be commingled as suits the teacher's purpose. The terms first and second, imply only the order in which the subjects are considered. This remark may be borne in mind throughout the work.

ILLUSTRATION.

THE word *illustration* we use in a wide sense, to embrace everything necessary, after the explanation of the terms of a lesson, to its further elucidation. We have hitherto been occupied merely with the language in which truth is clothed: we now come to the mode of representing the truth itself. Illustration in this extended sense is teaching, properly so called. Having broken the shell of truth, the teacher must now give his scholars its kernel.

We would here remind our readers of what we have already said of the necessity of coming to the class with a well-furnished mind. Our first care is not about the *style* of teaching, or the mode in which our views are to be conveyed to the minds of others, but about the truth itself. If our principal aim is to make our lessons *interesting*, whilst we neglect to make them instructive, we fall far short of our duty. Good matter, and matter suitably taught, are alike necessary. Unless our lessons have sufficient *substance*, no animation can give them weight. They may please, but they cannot impress. If, on the other hand, they are deficient in life and spirit, no solidity can give them power. But while the *substance* of a lesson is our first care, the manner of teaching is scarcely less important.

There is a system of teaching which may be called the *intellectual*, that entirely neglects an attractive mode of instruction. It teaches children as if they were all intellect, and as if a subject, on being stated, defended, and proved to them, must effect every purpose for which it was designed. It is cold, hard, and unsympathizing, and is little calculated, we fear, to teach either the love of the gospel, or the beauty or the terrors of the law. What must a child think of the doctrine of future punishment, for example, who has had it taught in a tone as if the teacher's great object were

to prove that his views on it were sound? and who hears a solemn text quoted, such as, "The wages of sin is death," merely as a triumphant demonstration of his position?

The prime object of teaching is not to give children *information*, but to bring them under the influence of the truth they are taught. If the sole attention of the teacher is bestowed upon the dry bones of instruction, and the lesson fails in consequence to awaken the sympathies of the learner, it wants one of the principal elements of a good lesson. The mere communication of knowledge is not teaching, unless the feeling or spirit which pervaded the knowledge is communicated along with it. In transplanting a tree, we must transplant it *living*. If we narrate a melancholy incident in such a way that our hearers are not moved to pity, we have not told the story properly, even though we may not have omitted one particular, and though our narrative has been quite accurate; while a less accurate account, imbued with more feeling, would be a *truer* representation of it, because of its possessing the *spirit* which the other wanted. The more accurately, indeed, that we depict the details, our description will be the more faithful; but no accuracy of costume will atone for want of life. Spirit is indispensable. The principal object of a merry tale is to excite mirth, of an engaging story to interest, and of a moral tale to instruct; but if they fail in effecting these several purposes, the failure is fatal, though other useful purposes should flow from them; for they have not effected the end for which they were told. This principle is equally true in religious matters. Religion is intended to produce contrition, humility, faith, love, and holiness, and we never teach religion properly, unless we exhibit it in a manner calculated to bring our scholars under the influence of these graces. We may have taught much information *about* religion, but we have not brought them face to face with religion itself. We might, for example, detail to a child the character and attributes of God with accuracy;

we might teach him all the names of God, and supply him with Bible illustrations of each of his attributes; yet if, *through our fault*, the child were not impressed with the glory of the character of God as a whole, we should in a great measure have missed our aim. If these remarks are true, then it must be a principal object with a teacher to make his lessons *interesting*. What does not interest, cannot influence. It is a serious mistake to make religious instruction dry.

To make this more evident, let the following examples of two modes of stating the same things be examined:—

God made light merely by commanding it to be.	God said, Let there be light, and there was light.
The condition of the covenant of works was Adam's perfect obedience.	Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.
Pay your devotions to your Creator. — (From Simple Maxims for Children.)	Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

While in the above examples we have stated substantially the same things, how differently do they affect the mind. We see, then, that it is as needful to imbue our lessons with life, as to make them substantial.

Yet different lessons must be taught in different modes. We must endeavor to imbue every lesson with *its own spirit*. Descriptions must be made picturesque; devotional lessons be filled with feeling; and where an object is to prove some great truth, clearness, precision, and good arrangement, are what must be principally sought after. If our lesson is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," it must be bold and earnest. But if it is the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane, how soft and tender should

our instruction be! A few examples of the different ways in which the spirit as well as the substance of a subject may be preserved and communicated, will be useful. It will be observed they are not particularly designed for children.

"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.—(*Shorter Catechism.*)

"Those who can look with dry eyes on other's sins, never truly mourned for their own."—(*Bishop Hall.*)

Prayer.—"Were men to hear the voice of God and conscience, they would not remain speechless; but they that are born deaf are always dumb."—(*Baxter.*)

Property.—"Property is like snow, which, though it were level to-day, would be blown into wreaths to-morrow."

The religions of man and the religion of God.—"Humanity hath separated itself from God. The storms of passion have broken the mysterious cable which retained the vessel in port. Shaken to its base, and feeling itself driven upon unknown seas, it seeks to rebind itself to the shore; it endeavors to renew its broken strands; it makes a desperate effort to re-establish those connections, without which it cannot have either peace or security. In the midst of its greatest wanderings, humanity never loses the idea of its origin and destiny; a dim recollection of its ancient harmony pursues and agitates it; and without renouncing its passions, without ceasing to love sin, it longs to reattach its being, full of darkness and misery, to something luminous and peaceful, and its fleeting life to something immovable and eternal. In a word, God has never ceased to be the want of the human race. Alas! their homage wanders from its proper object, their worship becomes depraved, their piety itself is impious; the religions which cover the earth are an insult to the unknown God who is their object. But in the midst of these monstrous aberrations, a sublime instinct is revealed; and each of these

false religions is a painful cry of the soul, torn from its centre and separated from its object. It is a despoiled existence, which, in seeking to clothe itself, seizes upon the first rags it finds; it is a disordered spirit, which, in the ardor of its thirst, plunges, all panting, into fetid and troubled waters; it is an exile, who, in seeking the road to his native land, buries himself in frightful deserts."—(*Vinet's Vital Christianity.*)

A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT.

"All was so calm and still, on earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit there;
Secure that naught of evil would delight
To walk in such a scene, on such a night."

HEAVEN.

"O happy, happy country! where
There entereth not a sin,
And death, that keeps the portals fair,
May never once come in."

THE FIERY SERPENTS.—"Well, I told you that the cloud stopped, and then I saw a camel come up, and it kneeled down, and then the people that were near took something off the camel's back; for they could reach them, you know, when the camel kneeled down. Should you like me to tell you what they took off the camel's back? Well, I cannot tell you everything that they took off, but I can tell you *some* things. First, they took off a great stake, and drove it down into the ground, *this* way; then they took off another stake and drove it into the ground, in *that* way; then they took off another, and another, and drove them into the ground; so they had got a stake in each corner; well, then they put four more stakes across from one stake to another, like that; then they threw a great cloth over the stakes, and fastened it down to the ground at the sides; then they could creep under it, couldn't they?—would not that be nice?—and do you know what they would call that? 'A tent.' Yes; and then the children could creep under the tent, and the father and the mother, and they could

be all so comfortable. Now, you know, it would not be always day, would it? so at night it was very comfortable to have this tent to sleep in. But I should have told you that there was more than *one* tent there; there were a great many tents; and they were all put in a row as our houses are put in a row; and then there was another row opposite to it; so it was like a *street* with tents on each side.

"Well, the people were all fast asleep in their tents, when all at once I heard a scream, and I saw a woman running out of her tent, and she was running away from a serpent, that was just the color of fire:—then I saw a great many people all running out of *their* tents, and they were all screaming *so* dreadfully; and when they got out of their tents they found that there were serpents in the grass too, and there were serpents everywhere around them, and these serpents began to bite the people: and you might have seen one man with a serpent on his arm, and another man with a serpent on his leg, and another on his back, and another on his shoulder, and another on his hand: and then, after a while, you would have seen this man swell all over, and fall down and die; and you might have seen a mother trying to hold her baby up in her hands, as high as she could, that the serpents might not reach it; but at last a serpent got hold of the mother's arm; and then, you know, she could not hold up the dear little baby; so it fell among the serpents that covered the ground, and they both began to swell, and they would not live long."—(*Curwen.*)

We think, in all these cases, the writer has succeeded in transferring to the minds of his readers not only his thoughts, but his feelings. He strikes the very chord that was vibrating in his own breast; and it is, in a great measure, to the *mode* of expressing his thoughts that he is indebted for this result. Were teachers to gain this

power of imbuing their lessons with life, a power which can neither be analyzed nor described, but which every one can feel, it would increase the value of religious instruction many fold.

Let us now offer a few directions as to *The Mode of Illustration.* The nature of teaching, which consists so much of the contact of mind with mind, makes it impossible to prescribe any rules by which a person may infallibly become a good teacher. A teacher, any more than

> "A poet, does not work by square and line,
> As smiths and joiners perfect a design."

We can only remind our readers of a few principles by whose light they should be guided in their instructions.

1. Let a teacher endeavor to adapt himself to the mental and moral condition of his class. A lesson may be excellent in itself, and yet be very ill suited to the children to whom it is addressed. Now we are to estimate teaching, not by the amount or the quality of what the teacher has spoken, but by what the children have taken in. They have been taught only so much as they understand or feel. "Teaching," says Mr. Curwen, "is the act of taking an idea out of your own mind, and putting it into the minds of your scholars." The teacher should put himself in the place of his scholars, and imagine, as far as he can, what are their knowledge, feelings, or prejudices. He should ask himself, Were I in the class, would this which I am now saying interest me? Would I understand it? Would it *tell* on my mind? A little practice in this self-examinatory process, will compensate for that fine tact which some individuals have by nature, by which they know instinctively how to adapt themselves to their audience.

The spiritual condition of our scholars should be attentively studied. A converted and an unconverted child require different treatment. Let us neither "break the bruised reed," nor say "peace, where there is no peace."

The Rev. Andrew Fuller sorrowfully remarks in his diary, "Visited a dying woman to-day. Found how little of my preaching suited her case."

2. The teacher must be *simple.* Simplicity can only be attained, first, by the teacher's thoughts being well arranged, so that they follow each other in their natural order. If number three occupies the place of number two, there can be no simplicity. Secondly, by his teaching *only one thing at a time.* Thus, if the subject is argumentative, take pains to fix what the argument is, before bringing forward one proof in its support; and let the first argument be fully understood before adducing another. Or if it is the qualities of a subject you are discussing, do not heap them on each other; never allow them to tread on each other's heels; unwind your ideas from your own mind at the same rate they are taken up by your scholars. Never let the thread of thought become raveled.

3. Exhibit the same subject in different aspects. Every new aspect of a truth that we discover, is almost equivalent to the discovery of a new truth. We have not fully seen the beauties of a diamond till we have seen it on all sides and in different lights. It was a new view of God's omnipotence that he gave to Moses, when, in answer to his objections, he said, "Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord?" An example of the benefits of amplification may be given from an address on the omniscience of God. This we might discourse of to a child in the following manner:—

"Mary, do you know that God knows all things? He saw Adam and Eve when they hid themselves in the trees of the garden. He saw Moses when he lay in his little ark by the side of the river. He saw Timothy when his mother taught him to read the Bible. He sees every person in the world just now. You know in Africa there are

a great many millions of men and women; they are black. They are called negroes. God sees them all, and he sees the missionaries who are there teaching them God's word; and at the very same moment he sees all the people of this country, and every person in this town. He sees you, Mary. He saw you when you were a little babe in your cradle; he sees you at all your plays, and in the school; he knows what you say and what you think; he sees every tear that falls from your eye, and every smile that plays on your cheek; he hears you singing his praises; and when you pray, Mary, God listens to everything that you ask; and when you lie down, and the room is dark and still, and there is nothing moving but your pulse, and nothing heard but your breathing, then God sees you, for the darkness and the light are both alike to him."

In the above specimen there has been no progress made beyond the very first thought, "God is omniscient;" but then it has been associated with a great many circumstances before unthought of, and will occupy quite a different space in the child's mind. We need scarcely say that this example is intended only to illustrate the *advantage* of presenting the same subject in new lights. The *extent* to which it should be carried must be left to the good sense of the teachers. It is only when the idea is important that it can bear much expansion: gold only can be beaten out very thin.

4. *Be minute.* A teacher's mind should be like a daguerreotype, which not only exhibits the outlines faithfully, but the most minute particulars. The graphic power of Scripture history is, in a great measure, owing to the minuteness of the detail. Instead of telling us in general terms what occurred, or narrating it in the third person, we are made to see the individuals themselves, and hear them speaking. Thus, in the history of Elijah, 1 Kings xvii, 8–16, instead of being told, in modern style, that on Elijah coming to Zarephath, he saw a woman at the gate, of whom

he asked a little water. It is said, "When he came to the gate of the city, behold a widow woman was there gathering of sticks; and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel that I may drink."

In our Lord's parables there is the same minute and faithful pictorial description. Thus, in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the rich man is described in this manner: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day."

It needs taste, however, and what we may call an artistic eye, to know what particulars to select, and how to group them for effect. The particulars selected must always be *characteristic*, and they must be so arranged as not to obtrude themselves, but give effect to the point or moral of the description.

5. Lessons should be illustrated by numerous Scripture references—"Bind them upon thy fingers; write them upon the table of thine heart." They are profitable for all purposes, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Teachers should not trust to their memories, but seek out fresh texts for every lesson. If this is neglected, there will be a few stock texts, which, in a short time, like sixpences which have passed through a great many hands, will have the impression almost worn out.

6. Lessons should be illustrated by historical examples. Facts are the best teachers of principles. What a powerful illustration, for instance, of the crime of breaking the fifth commandment, is to be seen in the life and fate of Absalom! and what a comment on the tenth commandment is Ahab's conduct towards Naboth!

7. A free use should be made of imaginative illustrations. It is well when a teacher, fully acquainted with his Bible and his lesson, abandons himself to the impulses of his mind, and teaches freely, using whatever illustrations either his memory or his fancy may suggest.

There is a crampedness and formality in our religious instructions that are extremely prejudicial. Our minds are kept in fetters by the supposed necessity of repeating a certain number of theological words, and proving, in an authorized way, so many abstract doctrines. Instead of religious teaching being the most simple, direct, and earnest thing in the world, it is frozen into impotence by technicalities, and the fear of diverging one step from the beaten path; and all sense of the *reality* of our doctrines is often lost in the rigid, lifeless aspect in which they are presented. Now, religious teaching should, above all things, be natural. It is one sinner pleading with another sinner to flee from the wrath to come. A story, an anecdote, a simile, a parable, framed if need be for the occasion, should be given with the same spontaneous freedom as in illustrating any subject about which we are very much in earnest in daily life. The mind should take a wide range, and lay all nature under contribution to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour."

Historical examples and imaginative illustrations are not only *useful*, they are absolutely necessary to good teaching, and as much pains should be taken with them as with the substance of the lesson itself. Of their uses, we shall name three.

(1.) They make the subject more *engaging*. They are the spices which give it a relish. Food would probably be nearly as nutritious were we to give up the use of salt, but its insipidity would destroy all pleasure in tasting it.

(2.) They make a subject more *memorable*. There can be little doubt that, as a general rule, the memory of the imagination is livelier than the memory of the intellect, or of any other part of the mind except the heart. The imagination has the same place in the faculties that the eye has among the senses. We remember what we see, much more distinctly than what we hear, smell, taste, or touch. When a subject has been impressed upon the imagination,

it never fails to be frequently brought up before the other faculties, and that in a very vivid manner.

(3.) Illustrations are a great help to the *meaning* of a lesson. The principle on which they proceed is that of analogy, to explain something unknown, or imperfectly understood, by what is well known. It will be necessary to give an example or two.

In Mark's Gospel, chap. xi, we find that Jesus sent two of his disciples to bring away a colt for him to ride on, without asking the leave of the owner. The explanation is easy. Our Lord had very possibly made some previous arrangement with the owner, or he was so well acquainted with him that this freedom was an ordinary circumstance. No difficulty would be felt with this explanation; but it might help to give it completeness, were we to illustrate it by the case of a man who, going into his brother's house, and not finding him at home, took away a book he wished to look at without asking permission. They would feel that there was no impropriety in the conduct.

The following illustration of the necessity of a change of heart, we think very happy; it is from a popular preacher.

Taking out his watch, he addresses the children thus: "Suppose my watch were not going well, would it do it any good were I to go to the town-clock, and take out my key, and make the hands of the watch to point the same as those of the clock? You know this would do no good, for the hands would soon be as far wrong as ever. I must send my watch to the watch-maker, that he may put its *heart* right, and then the hands will go right too. So it is with you, children. You must first get your *heart* put right, then your hands will go right, and your feet and all will go right."

Again, we might illustrate the evil of sin by the following comparison:—"Suppose I were going along a street, and were to dash my hand through a large pane of glass, What harm would I receive?" "You would be punished

for breaking the glass." "Would that be all the harm I should receive?" "Your hand would be cut by the glass." "Yes; and so it is with sin. If you break God's laws, you shall be punished for breaking them, and your soul is hurt by the very act of breaking them."

Or suppose we had been teaching the duty of setting the affections on the things which are above; an advanced class would understand the following illustration:—

"If you will go to the banks of a little stream, and watch the flies that come to bathe in it, you will notice, that while they plunge their *bodies* in the water, they keep their wings high out of the water; and after swimming about a little while, they fly away with their wings unwet through the sunny air. Now, that is a lesson for us. Here we are immersed in the cares and business of the world; but let us keep the wings of our soul, our faith, and our love, out of the world, that, with these unclogged, we may be ready to take our flight to heaven."

Perhaps some teachers may be discouraged by seeing such a demand made for illustration, and may begin to question their ability to teach, seeing their powers of comparison and illustration are so small. But, in the first place, the faculty of illustration can be cultivated, like any other faculty. If a person keeps his eye on the common occurrences of the week, or notes down anything remarkable in his reading, he may supply himself with numerous simple illustrations. One figure will suggest another; for a mind searching after any particular kind of knowledge, draws to itself, by a mysterious sympathy, the kind of nourishment most suited to its wants.

But, secondly, though fancy is extremely valuable to a teacher, it is not indispensable. Its want may, in a great measure, be supplied by an extensive acquaintance with the emblems and history of the Bible. Perhaps there is not one sin or duty, or any peculiarity of circumstance in which a man can be placed, to which a parallel may not be

found in the Bible. Any person, therefore, well acquainted with Scripture, need never be at a loss for suitable illustrations. The evils of lying, stealing, anger, blasphemy, unbelief, and apostasy, are all displayed there with a pencil of incorruptible integrity. Nowhere else are to be seen such examples of faith, hope, and charity; such patience in suffering, such humility in prosperity, such zeal for Christ in life, or such constancy in death. The Bible is an inexhaustible mine of illustration.

Yet we must take care not to overload our lessons with illustrations, and smother the truth in flowers. Nor should we overcolor any part of our lesson, lest the overlively figure divert the mind from the more sober part of the lesson. "Here we may cite the example of the Spanish painter, who obliterated certain vases which he introduced into a picture of the Lord's Supper, because he found that at first view every spectator's eye was caught by these splendid ornaments, and every one extolled their exquisite finish, instead of attending to the great subject of the piece."

Pictorial teaching is sometimes overrated. Teaching by this mode, when carried to excess, consists of a series of pretty pictures, which amuse the fancy for a little, but, having no body or substance, give nothing for the mind to act upon. The idea seems to be entertained, that the only road to a child's heart is through the imagination, and that plain language is either unintelligible or uninteresting. Accordingly, let the sentence be ever so simple, as, "Jesus went unto Jerusalem;" instead of saying this in so many words, we are told that, long ago, had you been near Jerusalem, you might have seen a man walking along, dressed in a flowing mantle, accompanied by twelve disciples, &c. Now, were some *moral* depending on the description, as in his triumphal entry from the Mount of Olives, it may be given at length, so as to lead the scholar to the moral; but in such a case as the above, the more plainly you speak the better. Or again, were these the words, "From heaven did

the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner;" instead of concentrating attention upon the misery of a soul that is ruled by tyrant passions, as anger, hatred, and self-will; the groaning of a prisoner, his bolts and bars, his dungeon, darkness, and despair, monopolize the lesson. The child is taught to pity *a* prisoner, but not to understand the wretchedness of a prisoner of *Satan.*

Now children, though they have a passion for stories, and though their intellectual powers are comparatively undeveloped, can think very well, and love to have their powers called into exercise. They can understand a plain advice, a warning, or an argument about religion, as well as if they related to common things. A child will soon tire of an endless succession of fancy pictures, and will sigh for plainer fare.

We must caution our readers against coarseness or vulgarity in their figures of speech. It is not in good taste to use such an expression as, The Bible is like a stone-breaker, because it breaks the hard and flinty heart.

8. In order to effective teaching, the language in which we express ourselves must be the *ordinary language* of good sense and good feeling. Teaching has been seriously injured by the infusion of such a large number of theological terms. When a subject is treated scientifically, we look for scientific expressions; but when it is treated popularly, then we expect popular expressions. In a book on chemistry, the words acid, alkali, caloric, occur as a matter of indispensable necessity; but what pedantry in common conversation to speak of heat as caloric, or of charcoal as carbon. In a book of theology we naturally expect to meet frequently with the words imputation, covenant of works, and federal head; but to what purpose are they introduced in popular teaching? Why should the religion of *childhood,* especially, be taught in so stiff a dialect?

The theological terms most in use are such as the following: atonement, imputation, regeneration, justification, adop-

tion, sanctification, righteousness, ordinance, vicarious, substitutionary, punitive justice, covenant of works and covenant of grace, divine sovereignty, propitiation, office of a priest, attribute, advent, curse of a broken law, election, surety, and federal head.

Most of these terms are useful for certain purposes, and it is necessary to understand them all; but they are employed as constantly as if the teachers imagined the ideas they express could be taught in no other way; that the *word* was the doctrine; and that a person who did not know what propitiation or federal head meant, must be absolutely ignorant of what Christ has done for the world.

Now, we decidedly object to such words forming the common vehicle of religious instruction. They are little understood, and still less felt. Why talk of the "vicarious satisfaction of Christ," when we might say, "Jesus died in our stead?" The language of religion should be the language of common life—as poetical, graceful, and devout as you will, but entirely untechnical. Familiar words, at whose voice the door of the affections has already opened, will most readily find admission when religion is the theme. We appeal from the practice of the moderns to the example of Jesus and his apostles. Their uniform practice, when addressing individuals, was to speak in the most direct language. Our Saviour says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Can anything be plainer than this? In Peter's first sermon he says, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ;" and, not to multiply examples, Paul himself, instead of following technical phrases, is pre-eminent for the life and freshness of his language: "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Are not the apostle's own words worthy of serious attention? "Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to

be understood, how shall it be known what was spoken? for ye shall speak unto the air." "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

Abbot remarks, with his usual good sense, that "children will understand the *language* of maturity easily enough if the *logic* and *rhetoric* are theirs." In teaching, therefore, we need not laboriously omit all the hard terms; let us get into the style of children, and they will follow our meaning. At the same time, one of the ways of acquiring their logic and rhetoric is, to study their vocabulary. In avoiding *words* above their capacity, we learn also to avoid a *style* above their capacity.

We do not plead for a babyish style of language, which reduces everything to the level of the nursery, but for the language which springs spontaneously to the lips of a man who is in earnest about God and the salvation of the soul.

The illustration of the lesson is followed by its application.

APPLICATION.

A just distinction has been drawn between teaching the *head* and teaching the *heart*, though the nature of the distinction is not always clearly apprehended. Perhaps the best way of explaining the distinction is to say, that when we address the intellect, we teach something which a person is to know or believe; but when we address the heart, we teach what he is to do. In the one case, our immediate purpose is to inform the understanding; in the other, to influence the practice. Thus, in teaching the doctrine of the omniscience of God, we instruct the intellect; but our teaching becomes an address to the heart when we infer

from this doctrine the necessity of watchfulness over the conduct.

If man had continued upright, the teaching of the understanding and of the affections would have had the same result; for the necessary inferences would have spontaneously suggested themselves. We could not speak to a perfectly holy being of the omnipotence of God, without his next reflection being, "Then with what confidence may I repose on his care." But the case is very different with us in our present corrupted condition. The intellect is still ready to receive information, but it is with the greatest reluctance that it follows truth into its consequences; it has no objections to be taught the particulars of Christ's death, but it shrinks from the humiliating reflection that it was our sins which were its procuring cause. Since the scholar, therefore, is slow in making a personal application of what he reads in the word of God, the teacher must do it for him.

The application is one of the most important parts of Bible teaching, and should indeed be the termination of all our religious instruction. Every twig of knowledge should bear its appropriate fruit. To influence the will, and bring every thought into subjection to Christ, is the ultimate aim of all instruction. We teach the Bible, not to make our scholars learned or intelligent merely, but to make them devout; not to produce great scholars, but to mold holy characters. While, therefore, solid instruction from the Bible is much to be prized, a practical application of the knowledge is indispensable; for a knowledge of the history, doctrine, and precepts of the Bible, which has no influence on the life, is only like a torch put into the children's hands, the more clearly to show them the path to ruin.

We believe less attention is given to this branch of instruction than to any other; and that, where much skill is displayed in the elucidation of a lesson, there is often a complete forgetfulness of the result to which it should

lead. Thus our scholars may be taught how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego braved the fiery furnace; but no hint is given of the numberless occasions in which they may illustrate the same devotedness. They are taught to admire the magnanimity of Abraham in giving Lot the choice of the land, or of David in pouring out the water of the well of Bethlehem, which had been procured at the risk of his warriors' lives; and yet a single remark on their own duty in the ordinary affairs of life may be considered a sufficient improvement of the lesson. The doctrines of faith, repentance, and the atonement, are taught and enforced by a perfect array of proofs; but a common-place and formal remark on the relation of those doctrines to them, too often forms the impotent conclusion. "How can we be saved?" is, perhaps, the last question of such an interesting lesson. A carelessly correct answer immediately follows—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" and the teacher, satisfied with the reply, repeats the oft-repeated formula—"Yes, if you believe in Christ Jesus, you shall go to heaven, and there be happy forever; but if you do not believe in Him, you must perish eternally." A far more thorough and varied application is indispensable, if we would teach the word of God with effect.

1. In the first place, teachers should endeavor to convince their scholars that religion is a *practical thing;* so that they must be *doers* as well as *hearers* of the word. A child will very soon learn to be content with a form of religion. Formalism is the religion of human nature, and is easily taught. To drive it from the minds of our classes must, therefore, be one of our great duties. Let us teach them that reading the Bible, or learning lessons, or attending school and church, or saying prayers, is not religion, but only guides or helps to religion; that religion is of the *heart,* and manifests itself in a holy life; that it is like life in a tree, showing itself in leaves, and blossoms, and fruit; that it is not of such a nature as to be able to be taken

apart, so that we can say, this is religion, or, that is religion; but that like fire it warms whatever it approaches, and makes a person in everything, in public and private, do all to the glory of God.

For this purpose we must map out, as it were, a child's daily life, and show him how he will act if he obeys the Scriptures. Our text, for example, is the parable of the leaven. Were we to describe the sanctifying influence of the gospel, how it has abolished slavery, mitigated the horrors of war, established just laws, and diffused a knowledge of God and salvation to millions untold, we should not have shown the children how the gospel was leaven to them. We must deal more closely with them, and show how, if they have this leaven in their hearts, it will make them honest, truthful, obliging, amiable, prayerful, and obedient. When we teach the fourth commandment, let us not only say, Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy; but, Remember *this* Sabbath-day: not only, Thou shalt not steal; but, Thou shalt not steal from your mother, your brother, your companions: not only, Render to no man evil for evil; but, Do not give blow for blow, bad words for bad words. See how our Lord sets us an example. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment."

The particular shape which our application will take, ought to depend on the circumstances of the scholars. We should look in their faces, and ask ourselves, What do they most require? Are they mean, or hypocritical, or passionate, or sullen? Are they indifferent to religion altogether? or are they walking in darkness, seeing no light? What are their greatest temptations? One boy is with companions in a workshop who are notorious swearers; another is tempted to run off to sea against his parent's will; another, a girl, is light-minded and vain; a know-

ledge of these circumstances will prove of the greatest value in the application of our lessons. The poet says, that

> "The very law that molds a tear,
> And bids it trickle from its source,
> That law sustains the earth a sphere,
> And wheels the planets in their course."

So let us show that the gospel and the law are not great principles reserved for great occasions, but that they enter into the minutest details of common life, and that the religion which we teach is a fireside and domestic religion, by which they are to be constantly moved. As the sun which streams on ocean and plain, and there comes forth in its glory, is seen in its *beauty* when it tints the violet, and puts a blush on the rose; so the gospel which impelled the apostle on his holy mission, and sustained the martyr at the stake, and there appeared in its might, comes forth in its loveliness when it sweetens every relation of life, and makes the hearer yearn after whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report.

2. Seek to convince the scholars that they are themselves *guilty*. Aim at *conviction* by *direct addresses* to the conscience. All teachers must have experienced the difficulty of convincing a child that he is a sinner, and of making him understand the difference between doing good as the means of salvation, and doing good from love to God, and as the fruits of faith—between being saved by works, and working because we are saved. Though we tell them ever so plainly that they cannot be saved by their own doings, the persuasion remains very deep-seated, that if they are good boys and girls, all must be well. It is one powerful means of counteracting this delusion, to hold up before them the perfect standard of God's word, and show how miserably they have fallen short of its requirements. We may tell them that God said they were to love their neighbors as themselves, and then enumerate various instances of ill-will, envy, hatred, and revenge, of which we know

children are usually guilty; or we may set before them the commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and then show how, in going prayerless to bed, in forgetting to thank Him for a quiet night's repose, and in living whole days without one thought of Jesus Christ the Saviour of sinners, they manifested that they did not love God with all their heart. In short, let us make the law a mirror in which they may see their faces all disfigured with sin, and in this way awaken the voice of conscience, God's vicegerent in the soul.

Care must be taken not to mistake an appeal to the *feelings* for an appeal to the *conscience*. The more earnest teachers are in danger of falling into this error, and thus to mistake the impressions which their address has made. A child may take great pleasure in his religious lessons, never absent himself from the school, and listen with eagerness to every word the teacher utters, and yet be indifferent to true religion. He may be deeply moved even to sobbing and tears, yet have no sorrow for his own sins.

We say a child may love the Sabbath-school without loving religion. There is no reason why the history of the creation, of the flood, of the burning cities of the plain, of David's courage, and Absalom's rebellion, and Solomon's riches, should not be made as attractive as any tale of fiction; and a good teacher may enchant his scholars with his descriptions, and yet leave their hearts untouched. It is not the *history* of the Bible that is repulsive to man—it is the most engaging of all histories; but it is its holy laws, its perfect obedience, its denial of all merit to the sinner, and its provision of salvation only through the righteousness of Christ. A love of Bible lessons does not necessarily imply a love of the way of life. We may shrink from the obedience, and yet be attracted by the way in which it is taught.

So, also, it is not the extent to which a child is moved, but the kind of emotion, that is to be regarded. It is not a

very difficult matter to bring tears to the eyes of a child, especially of a girl; but it is very difficult to convince a child of his sinfulness. We have again and again seen a child weeping what might be termed bitter tears, whom we had not the slightest reason for believing to be under serious impressions. It is quite possible so to describe heaven and hell, death, judgment, and eternity, as to excite the most lively alarm; but we must remember that all true religion in a sinner is based on deep convictions of sin, and that until he has looked at himself by the light of the law and of the cross, he is not really repentant. It is at the *conscience* then we must aim. Let us try to humble our scholars by an exhibition of their guilt, and to melt and move them by the amazing love of the Saviour; and, while neglecting no means of awakening their sympathies —for the feelings are helps to devotion—let us above all try to awaken the heart to a sense of its own desolation, and its infinite need of a Divine Saviour.

3. The conversion of the children must be constantly present to the teacher's mind. Let us remember that every child who is not converted, is in danger of eternal ruin; and that these our scholars, gentle and winning though some of them may be, and however closely they have twined themselves round our hearts, are, if not believers, every one on the way to death. To these very children let us offer the pardon of their sins, the renewing of their hearts, and the salvation of their souls. Let us give ourselves and them no rest till Christ be formed in them the hope of glory. Let us vary our illustrations, search the Scriptures for new aspects in which to present the ever-blessed truth, watch every favorable opportunity to reach their hearts, and be instant in season and out of season, to draw them from the errors of their ways. Little, indeed, has been gained for our scholars till they are safely housed in the Saviour's fold.

4. Our application should always be preceded by in-

struction. We are far from wishing our schools to be turned into places of sentimental excitement. We must convince the reason, that through it we may gain the heart. A person listens with great indifference to exhortation about a duty which he does not understand, or the importance of which has not been clearly explained. Persuasives to holiness will be wasted, unless the nature and value of holiness itself have been clearly understood; and the most passionate invitations to the Saviour will be thrown away, if a child has not been taught why he is to come to Christ, and what he shall obtain by coming.

If you saw a female wringing her hands, and weeping in the deepest distress, your heart might melt in pity for her condition; but how soon would your compassion be dissipated if you could not discover the cause of her distress. One fact as to her real condition would influence your heart more than a river of tears. So the deepest pathos, and the most stirring appeals, will soon pass unnoticed if not sustained by solid knowledge. The mind cannot be nourished with stimulants, any more than the body. We ought at least not to cultivate a sickly sentimental piety which expends itself in sighs, and exhales in hymns; but a rational, manly piety, which will stand the wear and tear of life, and which, instead of flying into seclusion to mope and despond, will come out to the world, and imbue it with the spirit of Christ.

Yet teachers often err by beginning their lessons with earnest appeals and admonitions before their scholars have been prepared for them by instruction. The consequences are, heedlessness, and a blunting of the feelings, even when the appeals are introduced in a more legitimate manner. The following homely illustration may show the importance of securing the reason on our side. We met a little girl one day in the porch of the Sabbath-school, who, pointing out another girl, said, "This lassie won't go into the school." "Come," I said, "what keeps you from going in?" "I

was away," she said, "for two Sabbaths, and I am ashamed to go in." "Your teacher will be glad to see you," I replied, "come." But her only answer was, "I am ashamed to go in." Here it is plain my duty was first to convince her of the impropriety of her conduct; so I asked, "Was it right to stay away from school?" "O no." "Is it wrong to go into school?" "O no." "Well, then, if you do not go into the school you will be ashamed of doing what is right." The argument proved successful. It might, of course, have been otherwise; but the incident sufficiently illustrates the value of enlightening the reason in order to influence the practice.

5. Our application should be founded on the lesson. This is essential to variety. It will be found that appeals and exhortations, when not growing out of the subject, are always the same. Death, hell, judgment, and eternity, are the invariable topics, which in a short time lose all their power. But if we keep to our text, the application will be as fresh as the lesson, and will form its not least interesting portion. We have seen the parable of the good Samaritan explained as an illustration of our duty to each other; but when it came to be enforced, the whole current of thought was changed, and the children were taught that Jesus is the best Samaritan, who has bound up the wounds of our souls, and given his life, instead of money, for our salvation, and they were invited to come to him for safety. Now would it not be more natural to press home the duty of kindness to our neighbors by the love of Christ to us? If we wish to teach the doctrine of the atonement, let us choose a text on purpose—there are enough of every sort in the Bible.

We do not rigidly prohibit an analogical application of a passage of Scripture; but if it is yielded to frequently, and especially if the chief doctrine is not fully applied, a dull sameness will pervade every lesson. It is when the whole lesson is firmly linked together, the explanation

preparing the mind for the illustration, and the illustration for the exhortation, that we frame our instructions on just principles.

6. Our application should abound in *personal appeals.* Thou and you are pronouns which should frequently occur. Let the children feel it is not a general address the teacher is making to his class, but that each individual ought to have an interest in what we say, and that to them as individuals we appeal. Indeed, the nearer we bring the application of a truth to the scholar's personal circumstances, we shall do him the more good. It is one thing to say, "A bank has failed," and another, "The bank in which your money is lodged has failed." That men are all sinners, and that the child we address is a sinner, may make a very different impression.

Why should not the teacher's mind kindle up at the thought, that in that book which he holds in his hands is contained a pardon for the very worst child in his class—a pardon bought with the blood of the Son of God; that to him it is given to plead the cause of the Almighty with a sinner; that death and life are waging cruel war in his scholars' souls for the mastery; that the issue may be to-day—that a soul may be lost or won this very day; and that the Spirit of the Most High is on his side, pleading the same cause with his wild or orderly scholars? O that we could feel that we are dealing with immortal truth, and the salvation of immortal beings; and that the "living truths of the living God" came glowing from our lips as if we had been to the world of light, and knew what our children would lose if they lost heaven, and what they would gain if they won it.

We are not to be understood as proposing to defer the application of the lesson to the conclusion. The conclusion may deal more fully in appeal than the other portions of the lesson; but suitable practical addresses ought to be intermingled throughout the whole, so as never to allow

the children to forget their personal interest in everything that is taught.

We attach the very highest importance to this branch of religious instruction; without it very much of our teaching will be lost. Knowledge of any sort fixes itself more readily upon the mind when it is to be reduced to immediate practice; and religious knowledge needs every auxiliary in its combats with the sinful heart. That teaching which stops short at the mere communication of facts and truths, and neglects to illustrate their practical bearing, is of no great value. The teaching that allows a boy to retire from school, full of proofs of the evil and danger of sin, in the general, but that permits him, for anything his teacher has said to the contrary, to quarrel with his brother, disobey his parents, or pilfer from his master, is radically wrong. Our teaching should be of such a kind that in every relation of life, as brother or sister, parent or child, master or servant, friend or companion, the pupil may feel the law of God, and the life and death of Christ, a governing and animating principle. It should be of such a kind that at every turn in the life of the scholar he may be able to say, "My teacher taught me from the Bible what I ought to do here." Sweet as the hymns of angels ought to be the voices that urge him along the narrow way; but whenever he is about to sin, our lessons from the Bible ought to haunt him like a conscience, and flash up in his face the terrible warning, "*You are on the way to hell.*" This is what we mean by *practical application.*

There is one mode of teaching religion in which everything practical is habitually excluded—it is that system which goes under the name of "teaching by rote." The lessons, in some cases, consist entirely of psalms, passages of Scripture, and questions committed to memory. The only standard of excellence is the amount of what is accurately repeated. The scholar who is blest with the best memory is exhibited before the school as a prodigy. Whe-

ther or not the child understands what is so fluently repeated, or whether he is pious, and lives under the influence of the truths contained in his lessons, are questions very reluctantly thought of. The memory is the only faculty recognized as active, while the understanding and conscience are altogether passed by. When children thus taught arrive at maturity, and prove ignorant or wicked, they are pointed at as proofs of the worthlessness of religious instruction.

We can scarcely suppose that this system was ever deliberately planned; it is rather the product of indolence and indifference; but it has infected a large portion of the teaching of even good men, and is fruitful of evil.

Could any teacher, who knows what his children are—how wicked—how much in need of pardon—of regeneration—and honest religious instruction, lay down such a plan of teaching as the following? "I mean to-day to hear the children repeat their hymns, but if there are any difficult words in them I shall not explain them. The passages they repeat from the Bible, I will take care to have accurately recited, but on no account will I show them the use they should make of the Scriptures; and the Catechism, of which they understand very little, I will not explain, because much of it is difficult, and when they grow up they will understand it as I do." No man would dare to make such a plan, yet many act upon it, and instead of knowledge, give their children mere words without meaning.

But they will understand what they learn as they become older! Have we, then, fixed the age when it is proper for children to be taught that they are guilty in the sight of God; that God loves them, and seeks their happiness; that Christ, on wings of love, came to earth for their salvation; and that the gates of light are standing open to receive them? These are the truths which we are *not* to teach intelligibly, but which they are to comprehend by-and-by, when they have grown older and wickeder!

Suppose it were true that with years will come more understanding, who knows that these children are to live to maturity? Do children never die? Do we not wish our children taught their guilt and danger just now? Would we not have them sons and daughters of the Lord —believers in Christ just now? Do we not wish them to be ready for death, and for judgment, and for heaven just now? And if we wish these things just now, it is now when they are young, and because they are young, that they ought to be taught what they can immediately understand and practice.

That system which loads the memory, and darkens the understanding; which ranks its scholars according to the extent of their memories, and whose glory it is to exhibit them for the amount of words and questions they can repeat, does not teach the gospel of Christ—at least teaches it so imperfectly as very often to defeat its great end. It does not teach children the grace of Jesus, the end for which they ought to live on earth, the almighty strength by which they shall be supported when they lean on God, the light that shall cheer them as they pass through death's dark valley, and the immortal happiness stored up for them in heaven. It teaches them little more than answers to questions; a list of words, such as adoption, justification, and sanctification, which, for all the benefit they confer, might nearly as well have been in Hebrew, Latin, or Greek.

O let us not so tamper with the sacred coinage of heaven; let us not so mar the blood-bought truths of Christianity; let us teach our children as if we saw them standing on the brink of a terrible precipice, and cried aloud—Stop, or you perish! Let us teach them as if we truly felt that unless and until they come to Christ, they cannot be saved.

The next subject to which we direct attention, is the *Revision* of the Lesson.

REVISION.

One of the most essential, though least interesting parts of the work of instruction, is the *revision* of what has been previously taught. Every teacher must lay his account with a large measure of this kind of work.

Very few persons are able by one repetition to retain what they have learned. Our knowledge of the properties of external nature, that fire burns, that lead is heavy, and snow cold, and iron hard, familiar as it appears to us now, and easy of acquirement, was not gained with one effort, but by almost innumerable practical lessons; and repetition from week to week will be found indispensable to the accuracy and permanency of even the commonest facts and doctrines of religion. A child will not remember that God made him, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners, that Adam was the first man, or Eve the first woman, merely because he has been told all these particulars once. A hymn or a text, though committed with perfect accuracy, will soon fade from the memory, unless the impression of it is revived by frequent repetition. For a teacher, therefore, to omit revision, as sometimes happens on account of its irksomeness, is to take a sure method of forming in the memories of his scholars an incongruous mixture of the most extraordinary materials. Names, dates, places, and facts, will be jumbled together without order; there will be little certainty in referring to any one event; and the real information possessed will be very imperfectly at the scholars' command. It is a law of nature, which we ought not to overlook, that all information which is to form part of the permanent treasures of the understanding, must be frequently repeated; and instead of fretting at this necessity, or harshly blaming our scholars for their forgetfulness, let us calmly resolve to do our duty faithfully.

Repetition is equally necessary to a practical acquaint-

ance with the great lessons of morality and religion, as to a familiarity with the facts on which these lessons are grounded. Perhaps if a child at any one time knew that it was wrong to steal, however his moral sensibilities in after life might be blunted to the wickedness of theft, he would always retain a conviction of its evil; but the conviction would not avail for any practical purpose, without careful and oft-renewed instruction. Every duty and every doctrine must be set forth again and again, till they become laws of our scholars' moral life, which they obey as implicitly as the ordinary physical laws of our being; till the duties of prayer, and love, and faith, grow into moral instincts; and the doctrines of the goodness of God, and the death of Christ, and the certainty of immortality, are the natural and necessary aliment of the soul.

The following are the principal parts of a lesson which require revision:—

1. *Everything committed to memory.* It is less difficult for children to commit a lesson to memory, than to retain it after it has been committed. The best way to secure both is to have regular periods of revision. If a hymn contains eight verses, and has formed four lessons, the fifth lesson may consist of a repetition of the whole hymn. If a series of doctrines, proved by one or two texts each, has formed an exercise for several successive weeks, the same doctrines, taking two or three at a time, may be profitably revised. This should be repeated until the hymns or texts become perfectly familiar, and are cited by the children with spontaneous ease. Some teachers may think this will be a great waste of time, but in truth it is the only way to save time and labor. The *apparent* progress may be less, but the real advance is greater.

2. *The outline of the lesson.* Where the lesson is a passage of Bible history, care must be taken to leave on the memories of the scholars a distinct outline of the successive events, and their mutual relation. A child who has had

the passage of the Red Sea for his lesson, ought to be able, without hesitation, to run over the whole narrative, from the time when the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them, until Moses and the Israelites sang their triumphal ode. But it will not be possible for him to do this unless, after the passage has been taught in the usual way, *the outline is treated by itself*, and the child is asked, What took place first? The angel of God went behind the Israelites. What next? and so forth, through the passage.

Where the lesson consists of a parable, or a doctrine which has been branched out into its several parts, these should be treated in the same way. Thus a child ought to be able to tell us at once, that in the parable of the sower, four kinds of ground are mentioned: that the first was the wayside; the fourth, good ground; the third, thorny ground; and the second, stony ground. He should be able to tell us these particulars in whatever order we ask them. Or if the lesson were on 2 Peter i, 5–7, he should remember the order in which faith, virtue, knowledge, and the other Christian graces stand. In short, the *heads* and *particulars* of our lessons should be carefully repeated by themselves; for if once they are firmly lodged in the mind, the illustrations by which we have explained and enforced them will be easily remembered too; but if the thread of connection is broken, we are in great danger of allowing that which was strung on the thread to slip also.

3. *General outlines of history.* It is a very useful exercise, when the Bible has been taught in its more strictly practical and personal bearings, to train a child to a familiarity with its general outlines. It is no mean acquirement for a person to be able to state with ease the date of the deluge; the periods when Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob flourished; the number and order of the plagues of Egypt; the duration of the residence of the Israelites in Egypt;

the date of the reigns of Saul, David, and Hezekiah; the number and names of Christ's parables; the general outline of the life of Christ, and of Paul. There may be a great amount of piety and personal religion with very scanty information on all these topics; but he who would have his scholars grow up to be men in understanding, and who wishes to enable them to turn his instructions to good account, will not neglect the careful building and repairing of these *walls* of knowledge, by which the waters which would otherwise be diffused and lost, are confined and rendered available.

4. It will be found advantageous, before the conclusion of a lesson, to ask a summary of it from the class, so that they may see at one view the different topics which have been discussed. It is better to require such a summary while the lesson is fresh on the memory, as the sooner we repeat anything after having heard it, it is the more useful.

The same summary should be repeated on the following Sabbath, previous to a new lesson. A few questions should also be asked upon such points as were most difficult, or least known, in the lesson of the previous week. These summaries and outlines may be profitably repeated at stated periods, more or less fully, as may be found necessary. Nothing will require to be oftener repeated than dates, and names of persons and places.

It is a very good method of revising a lesson, *to ask a number of irregular questions upon it*, to fix it in the mind. When a lesson has been gone quite through, the order in which the questions have been asked should be reversed. A person will sometimes remember a fact in its connection, which he does not remember for its own sake. Thus, many who can repeat the multiplication table fluently, were they suddenly asked, How many are eleven times eleven? would be at a loss, and would require to run along the line—eleven times one are eleven, eleven times two are twenty-two, till they came to the sum wanted.

CATECHISING.

In discussing this important subject, we shall treat it under the following heads: 1st, The Uses of Catechising. 2d, Elliptical Catechising. 3d, Direct Catechising.

I. Uses of Catechising. 1st, Catechising secures the attention of the scholars. A lecturing style of teaching children is peculiarly improper, from their power of sustaining attention being so feeble. He must be a very lively teacher indeed, who can command the minds of a class by an address above a very few minutes. The young mind is roving, and disinclined to continuous effort of any kind, and especially to continuous *attention*. It craves *active* employment. Even in sports it requires variety. Children's minds would have perpetual holiday. It is nearly impossible to make a young child sit quite still. In five minutes, he will throw his body into fifty different postures; and the mental restlessness is akin to the bodily. The younger the child is, the more must this disposition be humored. It is not till a later period that he can be harnessed to the car of life.

Catechising fits in with this disposition, by affording it varied exercise, without overtasking its energies. Attention is needed, but not in an unbroken chain. The thread of thought is alternately in the hands of teacher and scholar; and the child, instead of being dragged through a lesson as by a lecture, walks through it hand in hand with his teacher.

2. Catechising is an aid to the memory. There is a certain rate of motion beyond which an object, though passing directly before the eye, will leave no impression on it. The same is true of thought. A succession of ideas may flit before the mind so rapidly as to be forgotten the next moment. This is especially true of minute particulars, dates, names, and numbers. A question arrests the fleeting thought, and concentrates the attention upon it; many ap-

parently trifling questions must be asked for this purpose. Thus, if we ask, Which of Joseph's brethren wished to save him from the pit? the answer, Reuben, by calling attention to the name, will make the fact to be better remembered.

3. Catechising refreshes the memory. It keeps the mind from growing rusty, makes a ready thinker and speaker; and by renewing fading impressions, renders them permanent.

4. Catechising is an index to the mind. We learn by it the extent of a child's knowledge, in what he excels, and in what he is deficient, and are enabled to adapt our instruction to his wants. "A teacher who has not been in the habit of proposing such questions, can form no adequate notion of the amount of ignorance and misapprehension which this *plowshare of the mind* will turn up." A girl being asked the meaning of a word in the catechism, replied, a little smartly, "I know no meanings." A boy was asked, after reading the fourth chapter of the Acts, Why was Peter imprisoned? "For killing Christ," was his reply. These children both needed catechising.

5. Catechising disciplines the mind. The information acquired by it will be retained by the mind as the fruit of its own labors. Instead of being laid on the surface, it is wrought into the body of the thoughts. A person will remember the way to a friend's house in a large city, much better if obliged to find it out for himself, than if guided to it by a friend.

Every teacher's experience will furnish him with examples of the benefits of catechetical discipline. In a lesson on the evil of sin, after showing how anything is injured by using it contrary to its nature, as in bending back the fingers, or twisting the arm, we asked, Why is sin hurtful to the soul? A girl replied, "Because God never made man to sin."

On another occasion, speaking of the Bible being neglected, we made the remark, We may say of a great many what a good old man once said to his son, "Your Bible is *too*

clean." Some weeks afterwards, in catechising a class on the barren fig-tree, we asked, Mention some ways in which persons are like the tree? A boy called out, "In keeping their Bibles too clean."

II. Elliptical Catechising. There are two kinds of catechising—the *direct* and the *elliptical*. The direct, when we ask, who, why, when, what, where, &c.; and the elliptical, where a word is dropped out of a sentence, to be supplied by the scholar; as, Joseph forgave his - - - *brethren.*

A teacher need not confine himself to any one of these methods, but employ either, as he finds most convenient. At the same time, the direct mode is the more useful of the two. The elliptical mode suits revising, narrative lessons, and young children; it should rarely be used by itself. We cannot ask a question by an ellipsis which requires much thought.

The following rules, abridged from Ross's Manual of Method, in reference to the elliptical method, embrace all that we have to remark on the subject.

1. "The word or words left out should be pretty obvious."

2. "An ellipsis should not occur in a question." We once heard the question asked, "Of what is the attitude in prayer - - - of something else?" No one could answer it. The teacher gave for answer, "An indication." Thus a careless attitude indicates a careless mind!

3. "The voice ought not to be raised at the word preceding the ellipsis, nor in any other way any intimation given that an ellipsis is about to be made;" for the children will be more occupied with watching the change of tone than the sense of the question.

4. "Do not tell part of the word or clause left out. This, when done, renders the ellipsis useless." It is a poor way, unless with very young children indeed, to suggest the first syllable—as Rehoboam's father was called - - - So - - - So - - - Solomon.

5. "The sentence in which the ellipsis is made, ought

not to be of such an ambiguous form as to admit of various words being supplied."

III. Direct Catechising. When we wish merely to ascertain the extent of a child's knowledge on any particular subject, or to make him illustrate a lesson by texts or Scripture examples with which he is familiar, there is no great difficulty in shaping our questions. We have only to ask them briefly, and distinctly enough, and give them sufficient variety to gain our object. The great difficulty lies in so forming and arranging them, as to lead the children to the discovery of truth. A proficiency in this is not to be attained without application. To this we would first call the reader's attention.

1. Drawing Lessons. (1.) The lessons which a teacher leads his scholars to draw, must be such as he has *previously thought out for himself.* The questions are not to be asked blindly, with the view of getting sharp and ingenious answers of some sort; we must have a particular lesson before us, to the educing of which the questions tend. If other thoughts are suggested by the way, so much the better, but we are not to depend on these.

(2.) To enable the scholars to draw the inference which we are in search of, we must give them *the materials in full* which led us to it ourselves. The subject must be vividly described, that by the power of sympathy, and the influence of the natural association of ideas, the children may fall into the same train of reflections as the teacher.

Example—In order to teach a child the strength of Abraham's faith, we must remind our scholars that Isaac was an only son, a pious son, a son on whose life much depended, &c. It would serve little purpose to read over the words, "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son," and then ask, What do we learn from this? The answer, whether correct or not, would be very slightly associated with the scholars' convictions.

We asked a class one day, What was the best news that

Christ made known to the world? There was no answer. We then proceeded: Suppose a man were to fall into the sea—he is in danger of being drowned.—Two men stand on the shore—one calls out to him, I have come to pay you a thousand pounds I owed you; the other, Ho! here is a rope, seize it, and I will pull you ashore. Which of these two, then, had the best news for the drowning man? The man who had the rope. Well, what do *we* need most? The pardon of sin. And what did Christ come to the world for? To save us from sin. That was the best news, then, which even Christ could give us; for what would it profit us though we were to gain the whole world and lose our soul.

(3.) If a teacher finds on repeated trials that he makes little progress in this mode of drawing lessons, let him not spend much time daily in the attempt, but rather set the lessons he finds in his text as vividly as he can before his scholars, and examine them on what he has told them. The teacher as well as the scholars are sure of becoming confused when such catechising is prolonged.

2. Before catechising, the subject should be introduced by a few lively remarks. A pump out of use requires water poured in to make it work; so the inert mind will be stirred up to activity by the prefatory remarks. They will also set the child upon the track, and interest him in the lesson. For example, a child who is not able to read well, is so occupied with the pronunciation of words, that he does not catch the train of thought in the passage he has read; we must, therefore, set it before him previous to catechising. We are first to communicate knowledge; then catechise on what has been taught, till it becomes familiar; and then endeavor to lead the pupil to think over it, to discover the natural inferences.

3. In catechising, *start with the leading idea of the sentence.* Example, Luke viii, 1—"It came to pass afterward that he went throughout every city and village, preaching

and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with him." *Jesus Christ preaching* is obviously the principal figure in the picture, and round him the lesser ideas must be grouped; as, When did he preach? Where did he preach? With whom did he preach? This is preferable to asking, What came to pass? Where did it come to pass? &c. Second example, Col. iii, 1—"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." Our first question here ought not to be, What is meant by being risen with Christ? but, What is meant by seeking the things which are above? So also 2d Cor. vii, 1—"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Here—though we might refer to the epistle and its author—our first question on the subject of the lesson should be, What are we commanded to do? Fourth example, Mark xiii, 37—"What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." Here we must first discuss the meaning of watchfulness, before considering who are the persons addressed. By this method, we give to the different particulars their true proportion, as the principal idea is ever repeated in its connection with that to which it is related, and there is an order and distinctness in the questions highly conducive to clear thinking in the scholars.

In asking questions on catechisms, this principle is seldom attended to. The clauses are usually taken as they stand in the book, though they do not always stand in the best order for examination. Thus, "Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God." Our first question here should not be upon the clause, "Act of God's free grace," but upon the *nature* of adoption.

4. Catechising ought to be *connected*. The questions and answers should be so nicely fitted into each other, that by omitting the words, who, what, &c., they may be read as

complete sentences. Example—What is the best book in the world? The Bible. Why do you say so? Because it is the word of God. What book should be read oftenest? The Bible. For what reason? Because it is God's word. What is the use of the Bible? To teach us how to be saved. Give me another reason for reading it often? &c. There is a train of thought here, and each question is related to what precedes and follows, so as to have the effect of a spoken address.

Much catechising does not obey this principle, but is more like questions on the book of Proverbs than catechising for a determinate purpose. Example—What is the best book in the world? How do persons neglect the Bible? What is the use of the Bible? Prove that it is the best book in the world, &c. Now, if you render this into common forms of speech, it would run thus—The Bible is the best book in the world; many persons neglect the Bible; the Bible tells us the way to heaven; it was given by inspiration of God. This is by no means an extreme case, but it is sufficient to show how little impression such disjointed questions are fitted to make.

5. Questions ought to be *simple and distinct.* They ought not to be above a child's capacity, either in *sense* or *language.* While casting about for an intelligent answer, he ought not to be embarrassed by any difficulty in understanding the terms of the question; they should be so transparent as to direct the mind at once towards the object sought. Such questions as, Who once stood as our covenant surety? are very discouraging.

There ought not to be many *particulars* in a question. Example, John xv, 21—"All these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." Instead of asking, For whose sake, and for what reason, would the world persecute the disciples? the question, for the sake of distinctness, should be divided into two.

The questions should not be general, but particular, hav-

ing only one appropriate answer. Example, Mark ix, 17—"One of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit," &c. Were we to ask here, Why did this man come to Jesus? the answer might either be, To have his son cured; or, Because no one else could cure him. Both answers would be obtained more directly by asking, For what purpose did he come? and, Why did he come to Jesus rather than to any other? Yet great precision cannot be looked for in the impromptu catechising of our schools.

Difficult words should be avoided in catechising. Such questions as, How did Jesus *condescend* to convince Thomas? What promise did Satan make if his suggestions were complied with? What *induced* the Jews to seal the sepulchre? are not judicious. They might be expressed in common language. A child will often not answer intelligently from not understanding the nature of the question. A key will not open a lock unless it fits it. It needs a good question to secure a good answer.

When we have asked questions that prove to be too difficult, we must vary our language, or go back till we reach the point at which we lost hold of the children's minds, and take up the broken thread.

6. Avoid *trifling questions.* In being simple let us not be childish. It is mere waste of time, and it injures the mind of an intelligent child to be questioned about trifles in the lesson which the merest babe understands, as Matt. vi, 26, "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap." What neither sow nor reap?

Children are sometimes capable of deeper thought than we give them credit for. A girl about four years old once asked her mother, "Mamma, what is meant by honoring one's father and mother?" "If I were to bid you go to another room, and you refused, that would not be honoring me," said her mother. "O, mamma, but I never would think of not going," said the girl; then, after a pause, she

resumed, "*I might go slow, though.*" She felt that *to go slow* was to disobey her mother.

In Foster's Life of Miss Sarah Saunders, we are told that "Before the age of four years, having failed in some small duty, her mother remarked to her, 'Sarah, do you know that it is said in Scripture, Children, obey your parents?' 'Yes,' she replied; 'and directly after it takes the part of the poor children, and says, Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.'"

Some teachers plume themselves on the ease and rapidity with which they obtain answers to their questions; but, perhaps, in such cases the answers were so trifling as not to be worth having—the questions have not been deep enough. It is always a good sign when the questions make the children pause a moment before they reply—it proves the mind is at work. We do not go to school for our ease, but for the children's good. As Dr. Johnson says, "If a boy could answer every question, there would be no need of a master to teach him."

7. *Leading questions* are improper. Such formulas as ought, and ought not—was, and was not—should occur very rarely, and only as an introduction to something more stimulating. When we ask, Ought you not to love God? Ought men to pray? Was not Solomon very wise? Ought we to steal? the answers, Yes and No, are given to the Ought, and Ought not—Was, and Was not, and would have been answered almost as correctly had we omitted the rest of the sentence.

One of the most singular examples of this style of catechising that we have met with is the following, from a catechism on the evidences of Christianity:—

"Is it not a natural principle in the human mind to trace effects to their causes?" "Yes."

"Can the human mind, in tracing effects to their causes, rest, till it arrive at something which renders further inquiries unnecessary?" "No."

It is easy to avoid these expressions by a moment's thought. Instead of asking, Was not the Sabbath kept on the last day of the week by the Jews? we may ask, On what day was it kept? or, Was it kept on the first or seventh day?

8. Avoid a *uniform manner* of shaping questions. The questions, What does this teach? What do you learn from this? pall on the mind if too often repeated; and, like worn-out flints, elicit no spark. Let the form of the question grow naturally out of the subject, and it will be sufficiently varied.

Varied catechising is necessary, in order that the same thoughts may be presented in new lights. We asked some girls one day, "Who was the *second* man?" "The second man! I don't know." "Don't you know who the second man was?" "I never heard that question before." "Who was Adam's eldest son?" "O! was it *Cain?*" On another occasion we asked a boy, "Who was Peter?" "Simon, son of Jonas," was the reply. "Who was Peter's father, then?" "I don't know." "Who was Peter himself?" "Simon, son of Jonas." "Well, if he was Simon, son of Jonas, who was his father?" "I don't know." The connection in this boy's mind between the question, Who was Peter, and the answer, was not one of *sense*, but of position.

9. Never keep slavishly to Bible *words* in asking a question. Example:—"It came to pass that, as he was praying in a certain place, one of his disciples said unto him:" instead of asking here, What came to pass? rather ask, What took place? What happened next? Again, Luke xiii, 11, "There was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity;" here ask, What was the matter with her? What ailed her? not, What had she? Let the *ideas* in a sentence guide the question rather than the *words*.

10. Answers may occasionally be required in *Scripture language*, as, Who made the world? "In the beginning God

created the heavens and the earth." Why did Jesus come into the world? "It is a faithful saying," &c. How happy the answer of the boy, who, when asked, Why has God made you deaf and dumb? wrote in reply, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

11. Correct the answers in a *kindly* manner. If a child is scolded for an incorrect answer; or if the class is allowed to titter at it, a serious check is put upon freedom of expression. The teacher, in a pleasant manner, should commend so much of the answer as is to the purpose, or point out more clearly what he meant. The *religious* prejudices of children should be gently dealt with, lest we drive them from school, or disturb their convictions. A girl being asked, "Do you pray?" said, "Yes." "What do you say?" She then repeated a doggerel rhyme containing a prayer to the saints. It was better to push the error out of the head of this Catholic girl by the truth, than to blame her for her mode of praying.

12. Children should be encouraged *to speak their own minds freely.* A child will sometimes be observed looking up in his teacher's face, as if to ask, What does he wish me to say? Dispossess the scholars of this notion, and convince them that what you want is to hear their own opinions, be they right or wrong.

We asked a boy once, "What do you think of Peter for denying Christ?" "I think he was very *scant of wit,*" was the homely answer. How much better to have free-spoken replies like this, than capriciously to insist on the very words or thoughts we had in our own minds. It was a very *natural* answer of the girl, who, when asked, "What is tale-bearing?" answered, "It is when nobody does nothing, and somebody goes and tells of it."

13. *Guessing* should not be allowed. When children begin to guess, stop them, and restate the question.

14. Do not allow *the quickest scholars* to answer all the questions. Teachers wearied with the ignorance or inat-

tention of their scholars, and glad to get an answer from any one, sometimes allow two or three of the readiest to monopolize the whole answers; thus virtually excluding the silent scholars from the benefit of their instructions. It is to be remembered that the sharpest scholars are not always the most profound; the powers of apprehension and expression are not always equal.

15. The child's name should be put at the *end* of the question. Instead of saying, Mary, who was John the Baptist? ask, in preference, Who was John the Baptist, Mary? This may appear to be a very minute direction, yet it has its use. If the name is put at the *beginning*, none of the class but the one addressed will take any interest in the question; if placed at the end, since none know to whom it is to be put, all will be on the alert.

16. Catechise *up and down* the class. If the teacher catechises in the order in which the children sit, they will only attend to him when personally addressed; but by keeping them in ignorance of the person who is to be called upon next, he will secure the attention of all. The teacher should never allow any other pupil to answer a question than the one who is asked.

17. When a child is *inattentive* put a question to him, and he will not be so apt to indulge in wandering thoughts.

18. Rarely *refer to the book* when catechising. A person ought to master his lesson so thoroughly as to be able to ask most of the questions from memory. Questions asked from a printed book, or a written paper, lose much of their power. The child gathers much of the force of a question from the teacher's speaking eye: the eye, like the mark—(?)—after a question, gives the question prominence.

19. *Expressions of astonishment* at the ignorance or incorrect answers of children are to be avoided. A soliloquy like the following is not uncommon:—"Who was the first king of Israel, Thomas? No answer. What! do you

not remember? David, you can tell me? No answer. This is most astonishing! Robert, I am sure you know. No answer. This is really surprising! Have I not told you over and over again, no later than last Sabbath, that Saul—*Saul* was the first king? See that you remember it better again." All this might wisely be spared: it wastes time, and does not produce the intended effect.

20. *Do not repeat the answers* of the children. Besides wasting valuable time, it wearies the minds of the scholars, and gives them leisure during the echo to look about for something to amuse them. The following will be recognized as a common form of this fault:—

"What was Goliath's spear like?" "A weaver's beam." "Yes, it was like a weaver's beam."

"And how much did it weigh?" "Six hundred shekels." "Yes, it weighed six hundred shekels."

"And who went before Goliath?" "One bearing his shield." "Yes, one went before Goliath bearing his shield."

Answers should be repeated only when indistinctly heard, or for the purpose of expressing the idea more forcibly.

21. It is a bad custom (says Mr. Ross) to accompany every correct answer by the phrases, "Very well," "Very good," "Quite right," "That's a good girl." We may show that we *appreciate* a good answer, but we should not give praise for it.

22. *Liveliness* is indispensable in catechising. Slow catechising arises more from want of preparation than slowness of disposition, and may be greatly helped by the teacher being master of his subject before coming to his class. Sabbath-school hours are very precious, and every moment should be well improved; but slow catechising wastes time, and wearies the mind with its long pauses. The questions also lose their value by the connection between them being lost. As a tune, with an interval between each note, would cease to be a tune; so the questions, instead of being

felt to be mutually related, stand isolated, and do not help the mind forward.

Examinatory questions may be much more rapid than those intended to elicit new thought.

23. Ladies, in catechising, and indeed in most of the other exercises, rarely speak *loud enough.* You will see them moving along from scholar to scholar, bending forward till their faces are almost met, and whispering the question or explanation in a very subdued tone. But by this mode only one scholar is taught at a time; so that if the class consists of *ten*, and the teaching continues *one hour*, each, instead of one hour's instructions, has only *six minutes.*

The power of sympathy, which is one of the great advantages of *class* teaching above solitary instruction, is also lost by indistinct speaking. A question, though addressed to one scholar, should have an interest for the whole class; as a shock of electricity goes through as many as are in contact. "Distinct speaking," says Mr. Ross, "both on the part of the teacher and the pupils, is a matter of so vital importance, that throughout the entire business of instruction too much stress cannot be laid upon it."

24. Children may be encouraged *to state their difficulties* to their teachers in private. We have had interesting questions put to us in private, which afforded valuable opportunities of personal intercourse.

Some teachers complain that they cannot get their scholars to answer at all, and may ask how this difficulty is to be overcome. A due attention to the previous direction may, we hope, enable the teacher to reach the minds of his scholars; for, if we catechise in an intelligent and interesting manner, we shall rarely fail in the end to make our scholars work along with us: yet, as the subject is important, one or two suggestions may be given.

1. Be on a friendly footing with your scholars. The teacher must not assume the air of a wise, learned, dignified

master, who treats his children as poor, ignorant, insignificant scholars, who must be kept at a distance. The more conversational his manner is, the more readily will their minds open to his questions, for they will forget they are receiving a formal lesson. A little girl, of between three and four years of age, had a lesson from her uncle about Joseph and his brethren. Amongst other questions, he asked, "How many brothers had Joseph?" "Ten." "Ten! no, he had eleven brothers," said the uncle. "He had only ten," returned the little girl. "Papa, had not Joseph just *ten* brothers?" "He had eleven," said her father; "your uncle knows far better than you." "And if he knows far better than me," was her answer, "why does he ask me?" The lesson had been conducted in such a familiar way, that she had persuaded herself she was communicating important information. The more of this tone we can catch we shall have the readier access to the mind.

2. Ask very simple questions at first. Bashfulness often keeps girls silent. By asking questions which they can easily answer, we shall accustom them to the sound of their own voices. We ought to take pains with young girls at first, as the *habit of silence*, if it is once acquired, will become insuperable.

3. With *obstinate* children we must take other methods. We may pass them for a time without remark; or put a question, as if we were unaware of their obstinacy, and expected an answer as a matter of course; or we may appeal to the whole class, and bring out their replies by sympathy; or tell a story, which may melt their resolutions; or finally, when they are least thinking of it, by a sudden question we may surprise them into an answer. But when all other methods fail, a friendly visit will do good. Love is a key which will open almost any lock.

BIBLE HISTORY.

The sacred history contained in the Bible is the most wonderful and the most instructive in the world. Nothing but our familiarity with it could prevent us from reading it with breathless interest. While other histories narrate the sayings and actions of men only, in this we hear God speaking with audible voice:—we see angels descending on messages of mercy; and we learn that God was manifest in flesh; that the soil of this earth has been pressed by more than mortal feet, and that eyes of uncreated intelligence have looked on its beauty and its misery. While other histories recount the struggles of mankind for political freedom, and their progress in civilization, the Scriptures record the great battle which has been fought and won for the redemption of the immortal spirit of man. And while the world and time are the limits of other histories, in this are revealed to us the wonders of the land of spirits, and the glory of the kingdom of heaven. The benefits of historical teaching are generally acknowledged. We shall notice three uses of Bible history:—

1. It supplies us with practical moral lessons. These are deduced from the actions of men, and illustrate their characters, talents, passions, and temptations. The same object is attained by common history, but in an inferior degree. The characters of Scripture are the best or the worst that have appeared in the world; and their actions those which have had the greatest influence on the weal or woe of mankind. A familiar acquaintance with the Bible, by the light which it sheds upon humanity, affords indeed many of the benefits, without the peril, of a personal experience of the world.

2. It awakens the reader's moral sympathies, by interesting him in the actions of those whose history it records. As we learn politeness less by direct maxims than by asso-

ciating with good company ; so, the refinements of morality are best taught by example. There are a thousand niceties and delicate traits of good feeling which cannot be reduced to rule. For instance, we have a beautiful illustration of generous feeling in the life of David:—"And David," we are told, "longed and said, O that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem;" but when his warriors brought it, "He would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord; and he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this; is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" How touching also and how full of meaning the brief sentence in the Gospel of John, "Jesus wept!"

The Bible excels all other histories in moral power. Not to speak of the example of minor characters, such as Abraham, Daniel, and Paul, what a mighty influence must the daily exhibition of the character of the Lord Jesus have on the susceptible mind of a child! Here we see a perfection not enthroned in unapproachable splendor, nor displaying itself in acts of regal power, but appearing in the weakness of infancy, in the docility of childhood, and the wisdom of manhood; we behold it exemplified in a patience which no reproaches could ruffle, in a purity on which temptation could bring no stain, and a self-sacrificing devotedness before which the heroism of the holiest men waxes dim. Converse with such society is the meetest preparation for heaven.

The sympathy which is excited by the perusal of history, may be turned to a very practical account. When a direct charge is made against an individual, he stands on his defense; but he is thrown off his guard in reading a story, and approves or condemns in another what he might very reluctantly admit as true of himself. He is thus prepared for a more personal appeal. When Nathan related the parable of the ewe lamb to David, we are informed, "His anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to

Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that has done this thing shall surely die." With what tremendous power must Nathan's accusation, "Thou art the man!" have followed this decision!

3. But Bible history occupies ground distinct from all other history, in that it is the foundation of the Christian's faith. Upon it rest all the hopes of the believer. He reads the history of the old world, of the children of Israel, and of Jesus Christ, not only for its moral lessons and examples, but to assure himself that God is love, and that through Christ the world is redeemed. In the four Gospels, in particular, we have deep personal interest; they are the history of *our* Saviour. In the *life* of the Saviour we see him drinking a cup of sorrow which we might have drained to the dregs; and in his *death* we behold the atonement for our sins.

Let us now turn to the mode of teaching Bible history. We shall begin with noticing one or two of the less important and preliminary topics which require to be taught.

1. Miscellaneous subjects. These lie on the surface of the history, and have been referred to already in the chapter on Explanation. They comprise such things as social customs, diet, dress, dwellings, climate, division of time, natural history, and the like. The information communicated on these subjects should be *select* rather than copious, as they occupy a very subordinate place in religious teaching.

2. Geography. To geography more space must be given; for it is necessary to have a correct idea of the position of different countries and towns before a narrative can be properly understood. We have found a knowledge of the geography of Palestine to be extremely limited in our Sabbath-schools. Children, otherwise intelligent, will frequently commit the most egregious blunders about towns, rivers, hills, and countries. We think, were every scholar furnished with a small map, and were he required to bring it to school with him, so as to refer to it in every

difficulty in the lesson, a better knowledge of geography would soon be diffused. Geography might also form one of the subjects taught at a week evening class. The names of the principal places in the Gospels are but few, and could soon be learned.

It is the most expeditious mode of teaching geography to select one or two important places as centres, by which the positions of the less important places are to be described. Thus, in order to teach the geography of Jerusalem and its neighborhood, we should first describe Jerusalem itself, its appearance, and situation, so that the children could never confound it with anything else. From this, as a fixed and familiar point, we could then bid them cast their eyes to Gethsemane, the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the Mount of Olives, Bethphage, and Bethany. We might then proceed to the Lake of Tiberias, and make it a second centre from which to describe the towns round its coast and neighborhood.

3. Chronology. A knowledge of chronology is very useful to the student of the Bible; without *some* knowledge of it, history will be a chaos. We have found children who were pretty familiar with the lives of Abraham and Paul apart, unable to tell us whether 10 years, or 100 years, or 1000 years had elapsed between the periods in which they lived. One mode of teaching chronology, to be found in the biographical catechisms, is to give the scholars a mere dry list of names, dates, and facts, to commit to memory. This we regard as inflicting needless toil on the learner. If pains are taken to fix upon the memory the dates of each event in the current lesson of the day; if these events are connected, as they ought to be, with what preceded and succeeded them; and if frequent revision is made of the information thus taught, we believe a good knowledge of chronology may be very easily communicated.

One reason why a bare outline of events is difficult to remember is, that they excite no interest. When we read that Abram was called out of Mesopotamia; that he then

went to Palestine, and afterwards to Egypt; we read a succession of bare facts, which address no feeling or passion of our nature; and as they excite no interest at the moment, they are not likely to be treasured up in the memory.

A second reason why outlines are so difficult to remember is, that they give us no leading thoughts on which to suspend the rest. They are a dead level of dry facts, like a dictionary, and are destitute of color, life, and proportion. The name of a town occupies as much space as the most important adventure; and mention is made with the same passionless calmness of a martyr and a murderer, a marriage and a death, a patriot and a tyrant.

The shortest method, therefore, of teaching chronology, is to select the more remarkable events; discuss them at length; and then, with these as *piers*, bridge over the gaps between with the less important particulars.

That this is the more natural and efficient plan may be proved by an example. Let us suppose that a person, otherwise intelligent, were to peruse the history of Abraham for the first time; and at the end of a month, let us say, were to be questioned to ascertain how much of it he remembered. What would be the nature or amount of his knowledge? We believe that what he remembered best would be the more *striking* incidents; while the general outline of the history would be indistinct, at least the incidents would help to the outline, rather than the outline to the particulars. Thus he would probably recollect the *call* of Abram, and his arrival in Canaan; but he might forget where he pitched his tent, and the names of the different wells he dug. He might remember the generosity of Abram in giving Lot the choice of the land, and how he rescued Lot from the hands of the four kings; but many of the minor incidents, which are necessary to the continuity of the narrative, would be very faintly recalled. The stories of Hagar and Ishmael, of Abraham entertaining three angels, of the destruction of Sodom, and the offering up of Isaac, would

all be distinctly remembered; but such events as the strife between the herdsmen of Abimelech and Abram about a well, would be almost forgotten. In short, the *more interesting* passages alone would stand out from the waters of oblivion which had rolled over the lesser details. The *separate pictures*, and not the *outlines*, are what remain imprinted on the memory. Do we not learn from this experiment what the natural order of teaching is? and that we should give the memory, in the first place, the charge of those things which it is most disposed to keep?

This principle holds good in a single lesson. In order to make a child remember the order of events, we should not first drill him into a knowledge of the bare outline of the lesson; but first fasten his attention upon what is most striking in it, and afterwards run over the outline.

This principle should also be applied to Bible History as a whole. A selection of the principal characters and events recorded in it should be the first course of lessons; a more extensive selection should form a second course; and so on till the whole was exhausted. This principle is the same as that on which our modern school maps are constructed, where only the chief towns, hills, or rivers are filled in, a more minute map being reserved for future use.

A knowledge of chronology must not be confounded with a knowledge of history. A person may run glibly over the names of all the judges and kings of Israel, the length of their reigns, and the dates of their deaths, and be very ignorant of the real history of the Jews. True history is not a narrative of events, but of causes and consequences, of reasons and motives: facts are but the vessels in which these are contained.

An undue importance is sometimes attached by teachers to some minute particular in a lesson, as that Gaius was called "mine host," that Quartus was a "brother," or that in the miracle at Cana, there were six water-pots of stone, and that each of them contained two or three firkins apiece.

It is useful to know these things, but let us not give them undue importance.

4. The narrative. The historical incidents should be described in a lively and pictorial manner. The more *real-looking* we make our description, we make it the more true. An inventory of names and events is not a narrative. We require to infuse life into it in order to make it a history. Let the lesson, for example, be on 1st Kings xviii, 20–40. Here, after asking a few preliminary questions about Ahab, Elijah, Israel, and Carmel, we might address an intelligent class in this way:—

"Now let us imagine the scene: It is a day of unclouded splendor; not a solitary speck bedims the sky; whereever the eye turns, whether westward, over the waters of the Mediterranean, or northward, to the snowy cliffs of Lebanon, or towards the distant lake of Galilee and the Jordan, there is no appearance of rain. The sun pours its burning rays on the fainting people; not a breath of air fans their brows; the sea sleeps in waveless beauty at the foot of Carmel; and on its summit are gathered, with anxious hearts, the thousands of Israel."

The scenery of a country should not occupy much attention; for even though it could be accurately described, teachers are not landscape painters, but historical painters.

The following is an agreeable specimen of historical narrative; it is for very young children:—

"One day, when David was watching over his sheep, a lion that was hungry came up to his field in search of food. Creeping softly along, like a cat when she sees a mouse, he suddenly gave a terrible leap, and seized upon a lamb. I am afraid the lamb had strayed too far away from the shepherd and his flock, as some boys and girls are apt to do from the kind care of their parents, and the good advice and direction of a merciful Saviour. David saw it, and running after the lion, struck him with his staff. The lion

dropped the lamb, and growling with rage, turned towards David. His mane rose upon his head and neck; his eyes flashed like fire; and he gnashed his teeth. He was going to spring upon David and tear him in pieces. But God helped David to defend himself against the lion. After he had killed the lion, he took up the lamb very carefully, and carried it back to its mother. David knew very well who it was that delivered him out of the jaws of the lion; and when he told about it he did not forget to tell who it was who gave him strength and courage."—(Mrs. Hooker.)

Our next example is in a higher style:—

A Walk to Calvary.—"Look at the cross in the middle. You see the man hanging on it. He has a meek, loving face. His look is not in the least like that of a criminal. There is no trace of strong bad passions on his features. Though he is dying between two very bad men, he is a good man—the best of men—the only perfectly good man that ever lived in this world. Look at him; who is he? Your Maker. Look again; who is that? Your Saviour. Look once more at the middle cross; who is it? The Judge of all men. It is God the Son, who made, died for, and will judge the world. Why is he there? What are his crimes? For what bad deeds is he suffering? For no crimes nor bad deeds of his own doing. He is altogether without sin. Why then does he hang on that cross? Because *you*, dear children, are guilty and wicked. He is dying of his own good-will, in order to save *you* from hell. Look again; who is he? The Son of God, beloved by the Father. Why does the Father let him hang there, with big nails through his body, with his limbs out of joint, with sore burning thirst in his throat, and with people mocking him? Because he loves the world, and gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes on him may not perish, but have everlasting life. Look again; who is he? The Saviour, worshiped by all the holy angels. Why do the angels let him hang there?

They are strong beings, able to kill the soldiers, and take Christ down from the cross. Why do they not? Because they know that *you* and *I* must suffer, if Christ does not suffer death, and that it is his will to bear the punishment of our sins."—(Murray.)

For the sake of convenience, our illustrations of this head have been given in the shape of addresses. It is not necessary to adopt this plan in practice.

5. The moral character of the narrative. Children ought to be taught to compare characters and actions with Scripture. They should be able to give a distinct account of the true nature of every transaction of which they read, and of the reasons why they esteem it good or bad. A holy example should be compared with the law of God, or the life of Jesus, to show its conformity to the Divine standard; and sin should be detected in all its disguises and specious appearances, and exposed to the light.

Example, Mark xiv, 66–72.—When the children have read the passage, we should illustrate the nature and aggravation of Peter's sin, by detailing the privileges which he possessed, and the laws which he violated, in this manner:—(1.) He denied his Lord, and Jesus had said, "He that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels." (2.) Though he denied Christ, he was an *apostle*, and "to whom much is given, of them much shall be required." (3.) He had solemnly sworn not to desert Jesus, and "it is better not to vow, than to vow and not pay;" and (4.) He had been plainly warned of his danger; "He that knew his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

Or again, if our lesson were Peter's obedience to the call of Christ, recorded in Matt. iv, 18, in order to instruct the class in the moral character of the passage, we should illustrate in detail the qualities which make the obedience of Peter remarkable; as that he left his all; he left his all cheerfully; he left it immediately; and he left his all for Christ.

An examination of Scripture history in this manner, will quicken the moral faculties of the children, teach them the boundaries of right and wrong, and give them decided opinions with regard to the good or the evil of the world.

The teacher should endeavor to illustrate the character of the actions by appropriate Scripture references. Thus, were Stephen's dying prayer our lesson, we might illustrate its noble spirit by a reference to our Lord's words, "Pray for them which despitefully use you;" and by our Lord's example, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Or if the lesson were on Luke xiii, 13, we might justly contrast the conduct of the woman mentioned here, who, on being restored to health, glorified God, with the conduct of the nine lepers who, on being cured, went away without once thanking Christ for their deliverance.

In depicting the characters of individuals, we should endeavor to be impartial. There is a certain *traditionary* character attached to the persons mentioned in Scripture which is not always just. Gallio, "who cared for none of these things," is sometimes mistaken for a sample of a man perfectly indifferent to religion; a more exact scrutiny may modify this judgment. We are not warranted from the cautious, while cheering expressions regarding Abijah, that "in him is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel," to affirm that he was possessed of every excellence; nor need we, from Esau's criminal slighting of the birthright, portray him as a monster of wickedness.

We should be careful to describe *the character and attributes of God* in accordance with Scripture analogy. Let us beware of representing God as a just God only, and a terrible. His goodness in man's creation, in his constant provision for our happiness, and in the gift of his Son, ought to have a prominent place in our instructions. But it is equally an error to teach only that "God is love." God, "the righteous governor," is to be described, as well as God "the merciful Father."

In depicting character, let us suit ourselves to the capacities of our scholars. Children's minds are *tender*, but they are not *refined*, and their susceptibilities have a limited range. A child will understand how great the *love* of Christ was in dying for sinners, much earlier than he will appreciate his *humiliation* in becoming man; and he will see the *kindness* of Jesus in committing Mary to the care of the beloved disciple, much easier than the wonderful *considerateness* of the bequest, amid his own dying agonies. Much, therefore, which may add to the beauty of a discourse for adults, must be omitted in a lesson to children.

6. The last step in teaching Bible history, is to draw suitable lessons from it for the instruction of the children. From the particulars of a narrative we ascend to general principles, and from events to their causes. Thus, from the flood, we learn the *holiness* of God; from the return of the Jews to their own land, we learn His *faithfulness;* and from the cross, His *love*. In the repeated lapses of the Israelites into idolatry, we see an illustration of man's depravity; from Elijah's ascension into heaven, we learn the immortality of the soul; and from Peter's acceptance by Jesus, the value of repentance. These lessons it is the teacher's duty to disengage from the narrative.

We do not think the principle on which lessons ought to be drawn from the Bible has been always very well understood. Some think it enough that the inference (so called) be just *in itself*, though it may have little to do with the passage; but on this principle we might as well, when professedly treating of the history of Abraham, speak chiefly of his grandson Jacob. Others catch at the *words* of a lesson, overlooking the connection, and make every passage prove anything, as in the case of the Roman Catholic, who inferred from the words, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat," the duty of killing heretics.

Now, it should be recollected that a teacher's sole business in drawing lessons, is to discover what the passage be-

fore him really does teach. He is not an *inventor*, but a *discoverer*, and will find ample room for his talents in the profundities of divine history. We think the same natural principle on which inferences are deduced from any common history or incident, ought to be applied to the Bible. We shall give an example:—

"In the year 628, while Great Britain was in a great measure under the dominion of heathenism, some Christian missionaries appeared at the court of King Edwin, and besought a favorable reception to their doctrines. A council of the chiefs was held to deliberate on the new faith. After much consultation, a warrior rose and said:—

"'Thou must recollect, O king, a thing which happens in the days of winter. When thou art seated at table with thy captains and thy men-at-arms; when a good fire is blazing; when it is warm in thy hall, but rains, storms, and snows are without; then comes a little bird, and darts across the hall, flying in at one door and out at the other. The instant of this transit is sweet to him, for then he feels neither rain nor hurricane; but that instant is short—the bird is gone in the twinkling of an eye—and from winter he passes forth to winter again. Such to me seems the life of men on this earth; such its momentary course compared with the length of time that precedes and follows it.'"

On reading this anecdote, we naturally begin to reflect on its different parts. It presents us with a lively picture of the condition of England twelve hundred years ago, in many respects similar to that of the South Sea islanders when visited by Williams.

We are painfully struck with the ignorance of the heathen as to a future state. We feel interested in the old warrior who has so beautifully illustrated his own feelings; and we ought gratefully to reflect on the wondrous privileges which have been granted to ourselves. These, and similar reflec-

tions or inferences, spontaneously present themselves to every mind on the passage being read.

Now, our inferences from the Bible ought to be equally unforced. They should not be pressed into or out of a passage, but should grow from it as naturally as fruit from the boughs of a tree. Thus, when Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God in the prison, we are taught by their experience that religion is capable of producing peace of mind in the most adverse circumstances. The saying of Judah, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother," teaches us the power of a guilty conscience. The destruction of the cities of the plain teaches us that God is just. These lessons are truths *already existing* in their respective narratives, which the teacher has only to uncover to view.

But some teachers, as we have seen, desert this mode of deduction as too meager in its results. With them, lessons are "counted, not weighed," and are estimated by their ingenuity rather than by their truth. Every passage is tortured for lessons; and the more far-fetched the lessons are, like certain curiosities, the more valuable they are reckoned.

Besides the error above mentioned, there are two others akin to it; first, an excessive *spiritualizing* of Scripture; and, secondly, an over-fondness for typology.

Those who *spiritualize* the Bible, when they have an historical passage, will pass quickly over the narrative and its lessons, to convert the narrative into a sort of *parable.*

Example, Luke xviii, 35–43. Here there would be taught, as the principal lessons, (1.) The natural blindness of the human heart. (2.) The cry of an awakened sinner—"Jesus, have mercy on me." (3.) The opposition of the world —"They rebuked him." (4.) Christ's invitation—"He commanded him to be brought." (5.) Christ's mercy—"He said unto him, Receive thy sight." (Lastly.) His example—"He followed him, glorifying God." That such teaching may be very useful, and that several parts of this narrative may be advantageously used as an illustration of

certain steps in the salvation of a sinner, is not to be questioned. But nothing can be more evident than that the above six lessons are not the natural growth of the passage; and that in teaching them we are not teaching what it was written for. Let us always endeavor to ascertain what the Spirit of God designed us to teach.

The other error consists in an over-fondness for types. Every incident in the Old Testament is regarded as a type, by the lovers of typology. The bondage of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, the minutest fringe or embroidery on the garments of the priests, are reckoned types. Now, we are not going to enter upon an examination of this difficult subject at present. That there are types is undoubted: we would only caution teachers to be sure, before fixing on any observance or event as a type, that they clearly know the meaning they attach to the word type, and that they have good evidence for the assertion.

In concluding these observations or inferences, we would remind teachers that they should consider the wants and ages of their children; for a lesson useful to an adult may be thrown away upon a child. Thus, Paul replied to the magistrate by whom he had been imprisoned—"They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily! nay, verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out." From this we may point out to a *man* how, in becoming a Christian, he does not lose the privilege of defending his rights as a citizen; but any such reflection addressed to children would be entirely wasted.

We have seen that, in teaching Bible history, the great subjects which ought to engage the mind of a class are the story, and its moral. It may be asked, What proportion ought to be given to each? Our only answer is, follow the example of Scripture. The teacher should be like a microscope, through which, when a tiny little flower is examined,

the beauties seen by the naked eye are enlarged, and at the same time many more before invisible are brought to view.

A teacher is sometimes in danger of attempting to teach too many lessons from an interesting narrative. He is cumbered with his wealth, and, in his anxiety to bring out all the riches of the passage, he fails to leave a distinct impression of any one truth. On the other hand, he is also sometimes in danger of dwelling too long on a lesson. Wherever a narrative is fully detailed, as is the case with the history of Joseph, and the sacrifice of Elijah on Mount Carmel, a whole chapter may be taken at a time. The remark applies to any passage of Scripture. The sentence, "Quench not the Spirit," may be sufficient for a good lesson; but the description of Christian love in 1st Cor. xiii, 4–7, being so much expanded already, must be taught more summarily.

Some teachers find it difficult to know how and when to introduce the doctrine of salvation by Christ into an Old Testament narrative. They feel it should be done, and therefore append at the close a few statements on the subject, which may have little to do with the previous instructions. Cecil remarks on this practice, "If a preacher cannot so feel and think as to bend all subjects naturally and gracefully to Christ, he must seek his remedy in selecting such as are more evangelical."

Perhaps a remedy may be found, however, in an easier way. If we only recollect that all good examples are for imitation, all bad examples for warning, all precepts to be obeyed, and all promises to be received, and that no good example can be fully imitated, no precept heartily obeyed, and no promises cordially received without the help of Christ, we shall see that there is a direct road to the cross of Jesus from all parts of the Bible, the Old Testament as well as the New; and thus, whatever our lesson be, we shall teach that the road to heaven lies past the cross of Christ, and that to it we must come for direction through all the rest of the way.

PARABLES.

The parable is one of the most ancient modes of communicating moral instruction, and it still retains its popularity both with old and young. The parables of the New Testament are so numerous and important, that a few words on the mode of teaching them may be required.

1. The *story* of the parable must be explained before proceeding to its moral lesson. We require to understand the emblem, in order to understand the thing emblematized. Thus, let our parable be that of the *ten virgins*, Matt. xxv, 1–13. Before inculcating the lesson of this parable, it will be necessary to give a brief sketch of the marriage customs of the East; to mention that marriages there are often celebrated at night; that the friends of the bridegroom accompany him in procession, with lamps and torches, to the house of the bride; and that virgins are accustomed to form part of his train.

2. Most of the parables have one or two great lessons, which should be a guide throughout in teaching them. In the above parable, the chief lesson is the necessity of watchfulness; in the parable of the talents, immediately following, it is our accountability; and in the parable of the good Samaritan, it is our duty to our neighbors. The *object* of the parable must regulate the remarks made on the several parts of it.

3. A careful study of the several parts of the parable will supply us with the topics by which the main lessons are to be illustrated. The *dress* of the parable, so to speak, is so closely fitted in to its body, that in the one we see the shape of the other. Thus, in the parable of the ten virgins, we read, "They took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." We find from this, that at this period there was no observable difference between the foolish and the wise; they all had lamps; they all had them lighted,

and they all went forth to meet the bridegroom. In this is evidently depicted the external profession which people make as Christians. The uniformity of their profession is the first topic, then, to be illustrated.

In the same way may the second topic be examined—the *improvidence* of the foolish virgins. We find that "they that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them." Their improvidence appears in this, that while they desired to enter with the bridegroom, they did not take the necessary steps to be prepared. The precise hour, perhaps, was not fixed: in the East they are not so punctual as in this country; and on festive occasions persons are proverbially unpunctual. For these reasons they ought to have provided themselves with oil. In this we see described the character of those whose religion has respect only to the present time; who have enough of religion to live with, but not enough to die with. This is the second topic of illustration.

4. Care must be taken not to *overstrain* any part of the parable. One may make too little of the minute circumstances, but the greater danger is to overdo them. We have heard of a person who said, in teaching the parable of the good Samaritan, that one of the pennies which were given to the host signified the active righteousness of Christ, and the other penny his passive righteousness. It would not be easy to imagine anything more absurd.

In most parables there are details introduced which have no independent spiritual meaning. Thus, in the parable above noticed, the oil and wine which were poured into the stranger's wounds, mean nothing separately; the act proves the kindness of the Samaritan; and what we are to enforce is, the duty of kindness even to strangers. "Many circumstances," says Boyle, "in Christ's parables, are like the feathers which wing our arrows, which, though they pierce not like the head, but seem slight things, and of a different nature from the rest, are yet requisite to make the shaft to pierce, and do both convey it to, and penetrate the mark."

Good sense, a careful study of the drift of the parable, and of the manner in which Christ explained his own parables, will be our best guides in teaching them. Compare Matt. xiii, 18–23, and 37–43.

It may be noticed, that the manner of teaching similes and metaphors is in all respects similar to the mode of teaching parables; for a simile, when embodying a moral, is nothing but a condensed parable. Of such are the following: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path;" "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." In teaching these texts, we require first to explain the simile, and then the truth which it symbolizes.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

"The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." In other words, they teach us the law and the gospel. God gives us the law, that we may know what our duty is, and he gives us the gospel, that we may perform it in a right spirit. Neither the law nor the gospel can stand alone; and both are alike necessary. Holiness is the end of the gospel as well as of the law. God pardons our sins in order that we may run in the way of his precepts with unshackled feet; and he renews our souls, that with new-born energy we may pursue our course to heaven.

Let us first consider the way of teaching the *law*, or the *morality* of Christianity; and secondly, the way of teaching the gospel.

I. The Law.—The laws of God are so remarkably distinct, and their design so evident, that it would seem almost impossible to err in teaching them. The commandments, "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not kill," "Abhor

that which is evil; cleave to that which is good," are obviously intended to be taught as practical rules of life. A mistaken system, however, has been adopted by some, which teaches morality as if it were merely a creed to be believed. A person may be heard laying greater stress on the ten commandments being called the "moral law"—on this law being originally written on "tables of stone"—on its being divided into "two parts," consisting of "our duty to God, and our duty to man"—and on the commandments being "ten" in number, than on obedience to the commandments themselves. A boy was once asked, "What is the eighth commandment?" Not being able to answer, he was told that it is, "Thou shalt not steal." To which he replied very coolly, "I thought that had been the fifth." He seemed to think the question was merely intended to ascertain his acquaintance with the *number* of the commandments. Some of our present teaching has a tendency to foster such misconceptions. The following principles may be kept in view while teaching the law:—

1. The laws of the Bible should be constantly taught as *the laws of God*. The children should not be allowed to depart from school with the impression that their *teachers* only say such and such things are right or wrong. "Thus saith the Lord," should be the voice of every commandment. Our instructions would have far more authority, if we were more anxious to stand aside, that our children might see the glory of God.

2. The laws of God must be commended to the *reason and affections* of the scholars. It is a great error to represent the precepts of the Bible as an imperious system of arbitrary restrictions—"Touch not, taste not, handle not," by which the children are hemmed in on every side, and which seem intended only to fetter them. We should show that the statutes of the Lord are "not grievous," but that "they are right, rejoicing the heart;" and that the words "Thou shalt not," in the commandments, are for the same

purpose as a wall built beside a precipice, or a label on a vial of poison.

3. The commandments must be taught *very plainly*. The duties of loving God, and believing in Christ, of prayer, reading the Bible, and forgiving our enemies, and the evils of lying, malice, swearing, and unbelief, should be taught in the most unambiguous language. It is of little moment, comparatively, though a child should mistake our meaning when we tell a story, or narrate a passage of history; but it is of the most melancholy consequence for a child, through our fault, not to know precisely what the Lord his God requires of him. The most unvarnished simplicity is, therefore, a first requisite in teaching the law.

4. "To be plain," as Dr. Chalmers says, "*let us be particular.*" The commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is as simply expressed as it can be; but a child may learn its meaning without understanding the extent of its application. He will shrink with abhorrence from murder, but not from its beginnings in petty anger and revenge.

Many striking examples could be given of the extent to which an uninstructed conscience may become warped, and the freaks of which it is capable. The Greek pirates in the Mediterranean, to whom rapine and murder are a business, are known to observe with rigor the fast-days of the Greek church. A little girl in Glasgow, being imprisoned for theft, was found in her cell one day crying bitterly. On being asked the reason, she replied, "O, my mother is very poor, and now that I am in prison there is nobody to steal for her!" How much good feeling is blended here with a total unconsciousness of the evil of theft.

There are several reasons why, in teaching the different commandments to children, minute exemplification is necessary.

First. They are slow to perceive the *spirituality* of God's law. They can appreciate the evil of outward acts, and yet remain ignorant that the thought of evil is sin. They are

apt to estimate the amount of the crime by the extent of the injury inflicted, more than by the motive of the criminal. It is difficult to teach a child that to steal a cent, and to steal a dollar, are the same crimes.

Secondly. It is only with little things that children have to do. They cannot perjure themselves, or commit murder, or make a false profession of religion at the Lord's table; but they can very easily lie and swear, and indulge in many abominable practices. We therefore reverse the order in which duties should be taught when we teach a child what he is to do when he becomes a man, and neglect his present conduct. The proper performance of present duty is the best preparation for the discharge of future duty. It is of more importance that a child be taught to obey his mother at present, from regard to God, than to know that when a man, if it were necessary, he must be willing to die as a martyr. That duty is always of most consequence to us *at the time*, which we have *first to do*. It may be a very small thing in itself, but being *duty*, it is imperative. It is my next step in a journey that I most need to know. If we wished to train up a child to become a good citizen, we should not begin with teaching him the distant duties he may have to perform as a man, though these might not be altogether lost sight of; but if we can make him a good child, a good scholar, a good brother, and a good companion, there is little fear of his finally becoming also a good citizen. So, let a child be on the way to heaven just now—a way that always consists in keeping the commandments of God—and he is in the direct road for being in the same way all the rest of his life.

5. We must teach the *sanctions of the law*. It is a misplaced tenderness which would hide from a child the consequences of sin, and never name hell to him and its awful woes. God would never have revealed these doctrines to us unless we had needed them. It is in love that he has made them known, for mercy speaks to man in many differ-

ent keys. Love is as conspicuous in warning from a precipice, as in inviting to a banquet. We need the night as well as the day; the cloud, and the shower, and the tempest, as well as the sunshine and the summer sky. We require not only tender invitations to come to the Saviour, but solemn warnings to flee from the wrath to come. The teacher, therefore, neglects an important duty, who does not call sin, sin; and hell, hell. But let us see that we treat this solemn doctrine with the utmost *tenderness*, as if we trembled at the very mention of its miseries.

6. Obedience to the law must be enforced by the doctrines of the gospel. The gospel is "mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan;" and we must teach our children, looking despairingly at the weary road of self-mortification they have to travel, and sinking in almost hopeless despondency in the struggle with their rebellious passions, that there is "One who is able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the throne of his glory, with exceeding joy."

We have now to speak of the manner of teaching the gospel.

II. The Gospel.—1. The cross of Christ ought to be the main subject of our instructions. We should say with the apostle, "I am determined to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ and him crucified." As we see the light of the sun, even when not looking directly to the sun himself; so the cross should illuminate our path, though our feet are not treading near Calvary. The Old Testament must be read by the light of the New. "We might as well," says Bridges, "speak of a village that has no road to the metropolis, as of a point of Christian doctrine, privilege, or practice, that has no reference to Christ crucified." That lesson, or system of lessons, is radically defective, of which the cross is not the life. "The true teaching of the solar system is to begin with the *sun*."

2. The doctrines of the Bible must be taught as *motives*

to holiness. Before the introduction of Christianity, many of the more common moral maxims were recognized among men; but they remained nearly neglected from the want of sufficiently powerful motives to obedience. These motives are supplied by the gospel. It is to its motives, even more than to its morals, that Christianity owes its superiority. Its divine morality might have been exhibited in all its matchless beauty, but of what avail would it have been without the motives supplied by the love of God, and the death of Jesus? What does its morality in fact avail with those who reject the atonement of Christ? It is less ignorance than willfulness that makes men sin. The eye sees farther than the feet are willing to follow. Never does a soul truly hate sin, and love God, until constrained by the love of Christ.

When the doctrines of Christianity are contemplated in this light, it is obvious, that being motives, they do not terminate in themselves; like all other motive forces, they must be *applied* to be of any worth. They must be intimately connected with the duties of life before their true nature or value can be understood: it is here that the law and the gospel meet. To teach morality without the gospel, is to prescribe duties, which, owing to the perverse nature of man, will never be performed. To teach the gospel without the law, is to furnish the soul with powerful motives, and give them little to do. It is acting like a person who should make a beautiful engine, finish every wheel and joint in the most perfect style, bring it out to show its capabilities, how swift it would fly, and what a weight of carriages it could draw; but when a message arrives for an express, in a matter of life and death, he rolls the engine back to its shed to rust in idleness. It is indeed a most fatal but a very common omission of the very end and essence of the doctrines of the Bible, to dissociate them from their consequences, and teach them as mere dogmas to be understood and believed. How many have no idea of religion beyond

its rites and ceremonies, its creeds and confessions! How many regard it as a something to be read about, to be talked about, to be prayed about, and, it may be, to be fought about; but how few understand it to be a holy influence under which they are always to live and act. How have the eagle-wings of Christianity, on which the soul might have soared almost to the throne of the eternal, been caged and clipped by a word-loving, work-hating profession; and how many Sabbath-day Christians are there whose lives give the lie to their whole creed.

3. A proper understanding of the true nature of Christianity as a religion of motives, will show us the error of those who are now trying to elevate *training* above teaching.

It is maintained by some, that teaching, even the teaching of the gospel, is of no value unless we place children in situations where they may cultivate the virtues inculcated in the school. "Honesty, for example," it is said, "cannot be taught by rule, but the play-ground is to be filled with objects on which self-denial must be exercised, and thus the latent moral powers will be strengthened by exercise." The great advantage of judicious training must be acknowledged by all who have seen the contaminating influence of bad example. Could we preserve our children from the noxious atmosphere which too many of them breathe at home, our instructions would yield a far more abundant produce. But it is never to be forgotten that children are depraved by nature, and that they are wicked, independent of example; that being guilty, the first and most important truth they require to know, is the way of being saved; that the only principle which can quicken their dead souls is to be found in the Bible; and that of all motives or influences which were ever calculated to deter from sin, or animate to holiness, none, not even example, or the best moral training, are so powerful as the love of Christ.

4. The doctrines of the gospel can, and ought to be expressed in ordinary language. Every doctrine has a popu-

lar side as well as an abstract one; and it is the popular side that should be turned to children. If you speak to a child of "the work of the Spirit," it will appear very mysterious; but show him that the Holy Spirit, if he prays for his help, is ready to instruct him when he is ignorant, to strengthen him when he is tempted, and to cheer him when he is sad; and you tell him truths so much adapted to his wants, that all mystery disappears. It is for want of looking at the *practical* side of doctrines that we hear so much of the mysteries of Christianity. There are no mysteries, properly speaking, *in* Christianity; everything revealed is distinct; it is what Christianity touches on, and what lies beyond it—that which is *unrevealed*, and with which we have little to do, that is mysterious.

5. Care must be taken to teach *all* the doctrines of the gospel. There are certain doctrines which have obtained an almost exclusive place in our systems of teaching. Many children could give us no satisfactory information upon such topics as these:—the benefits of affliction, the duty of contentment, the working of Christian charity, or the sources of religious happiness. These we consider equally important with many of the subjects more commonly taught in schools. Religion is not complete without them. It is as necessary to know that "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord," as that Adam was our federal head. Yet how many are ignorant of the first that know the last! It is as important that a child shall be familiar with the beautiful description of love in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians, as it is for him to know that "some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others;" and to know that "He that doeth good is of God," as to be acquainted with the decrees of God. There has been almost a kind of caprice in the selection of the doctrines denominated religious, and though doubtless the most important have not been omitted, a great many only second in importance have been neglected.

Now, this is to teach a one-sided religion. There is not a doctrine in the Bible which is not addressed to some want of our nature. If you leave out one, you mar the effect of the whole, as the light of the sun would be marred by the destruction of one of the colors which, blended together, make its beams so glorious.

Our instructions should correspond with the comprehensive nature of religion, and should be addressed to every part of a child's nature, and should be pictures for the imagination, reason for the understanding, and love for the heart. We should teach him no provincial dialect of religion, but give him the whole word of God for his heritage. We should not teach him that faith is everything, or works everything, but he must be taught to rejoice in every beaming star that twinkles in the Christian's sky. While we teach him to believe in Christ, as the first step to salvation, he must also have all the way of holiness tracked out to him, up which he is to wend his toilsome but happy way. Let us teach, in short, that the life which beats in a good man's heart, sends the warm, fresh life-blood through the whole spiritual frame, and that we must become Christians thoroughly, when we become Christians at all.

There is a similar want of fullness and variety in the way of teaching particular doctrines: there are a few favorite aspects in which they are always made to appear, as if they had no other. Let us take prayer for an example. The whole information of many children on prayer is confined to one or two common-places, such as these:—that it is a duty to pray; that we should pray every morning and every night; that we should pray to God only; that we should ask for things agreeable to His will; and that we should pray in the name of Christ. Now, there are many other things about prayer equally important, and equally easy of being taught, with those we have named. Shall nothing be said of the privilege of prayer, of the majesty of the Being whom we address, of sincerity in prayer,

intelligence, and humility? They should be taught, that if they regard iniquity in their heart, God will not hear them; that they may pray at any moment, and that the Holy Spirit will teach them how to pray. We are aware that many teachers enter fully into all these particulars, but others confine themselves to a narrow and beaten round from which they rarely diverge.

We may charge upon this meager style of teaching the decline of many young Christians in piety. Their piety is ardent whilst the thoughts of pardon through Christ, escape from hell, and the happiness of heaven are fresh; but after a time, these subjects, recurring in unvarying sameness, cease to stimulate the heart, and it waxes cold; whereas, a deeper acquaintance with religious *knowledge* would have afforded them an inexhaustible store of fuel by which to feed the flame of devotion.

CATECHISMS.

The mode of teaching religion by catechisms is as distinct a system of teaching as the lesson, the training, or the intellectual systems.

Of all these systems, it has been the most popular. It has held its ground for several centuries against many rivals, and from the numerous catechisms daily issuing from the press, its popularity appears to be but little on the wane. All denominations employ it; it is equally in favor in the school as in the family, and as a book for the young and the adult. Among the causes of this general popularity may be named the following:—

1. The denominational character of many of the catechisms. The Church of England Catechism, the Wesleyan Catechism, and the Assembly Catechism, partake of this character. It was the object of these catechisms, while inculcating the general truths of religion, to guard against

the real or supposed heresies of other sects. This feeling, a praiseworthy one when enlightened, has caused them to be largely employed in the different denominations from which they issued, and by those who sympathized in their views.

2. As the catechism presents a clear and condensed view of religion, it is plausibly supposed that if we transfer the system which the catechism contains, from the book to the mind of the scholar, we shall furnish him with a complete knowledge of divinity. The clearness of the definitions of doctrine, it is supposed, will make them easy of apprehension, and their compactness will render them memorable. It is imagined, therefore, that the shortest road to an acquaintance with religious knowledge, is to drill a child into a good system of divinity.

3. The catechetical form of the catechism has had no inconsiderable influence upon its popularity. By a strange illusion, the teacher invests the scholar who repeats the catechism with all the knowledge and accurate perception which are contained in his answer, as if it were his own deliberately expressed convictions.

4. We feel constrained to add, that with careless parents and teachers, the catechism owes much of its popularity to the ease it affords them. They can quiet their consciences with the form of religious instruction, and yet spare themselves the slightest mental effort. Were the catechism withdrawn, they would be compelled to think before they could teach.

A system so popular demands considerable attention. Let us then inquire into the nature of the catechism, and the manner in which it should be taught.

There are two aspects in which every subject may be studied. It may be studied either practically or scientifically. Let us take an oak tree, for example: A person examining it for practical purposes, would consider such things as these—the best soil for it to grow in, how and when it

should be planted, when it comes to maturity, the market price of oak, and the uses to which it can be applied. A person examining an oak tree for scientific purposes, considers its trunk, branches, bark, and leaves; he determines to what tribe of plants it belongs; or he considers its physiology. Religion also can be studied in both of these aspects. When we consider it popularly, we inquire, What does it command or forbid? What are we to believe and do? When we examine it theologically, we occupy ourselves with the definition, classification, and defense of doctrine. For example, prayer is taught practically in the Bible in such sentences as these: "Pray without ceasing;" "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." In the Shorter Catechism, it is taught theologically in these words: "Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." A religious catechism teaches the *science* of religion: it is a system of theology. Many text-books, schemes of lessons, and abridgments of doctrines, which do not take the form of question and answer, possess the same character. They are to religion what botany is to plants, and geology to the rocks and strata of the globe.

But though the majority of religious catechisms are designed to teach religion in a systematic form, they may be taught popularly as well as theologically. Let us see how they may be taught in both ways.

1. *Popularly.* In this case the catechism is regarded as a mere list of subjects, which are to be expanded by the teacher in his lesson. Let the questions be those found at the commencement of most of the catechisms for infants: "Who was the first man?—Adam." The teacher, having obtained the answer, begins to tell his scholars, that about six thousand years ago there was not a single person in the whole world. "You might have traveled," he says to his

class, "north or south, east or west, as far and as long as you chose, and not a man or woman, or boy or girl, would have been seen: it was then that God made Adam out of the dust of the ground." In the same manner we might amplify the question, "Who made you?—God;" pointing out that God made all the people in the school, and in the town, and the country, and the whole world. There are a few catechisms, such as the Infant's Catechism by Mr. Gall, which afford a good exemplification of this style of teaching. The same principles, adapted to the circumstances of the scholars, may be used in the more advanced catechisms. The teacher is to regard the question as a mere outline which he is to fill up by his instructions. Thus, "What is the work of creation?—The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good." In teaching this, we should dwell in succession upon the power of God in making all things of nothing, and in making them by a word; upon the different things created on each of the six days, and upon their perfect character as they came from the hand of their maker.

2. The Catechism may be taught *theologically*. No religious education is complete where theology is neglected. It is for want of a systematic study of the doctrines of the Bible—from not perceiving the boundaries and dependencies of the different doctrines—that many of our religious errors arise.

Our readers may have seen a leaf in winter which had been tossed about by the winds, and bleached by the sun and rain, till all the softer parts had been washed away, and there remained nothing but a beautiful net-work of fibre. This was the frame-work of the leaf, and showed how the parts were connected, and in what way nourishment was conveyed to the farthest extremities. A catechism, taught theologically, is intended to exhibit the frame-work of religion—the plan of salvation. It is the anatomy

of religion, and shows how the doctrines are constituted, and the relation they bear to each other.

Or we may regard a catechism of divinity, to use a commercial illustration, as a ledger, into which the doctrines which lie scattered in the Bible are inserted under their respective heads. Thus, all the attributes of God are nowhere recorded in Scripture in a single verse; the catechism presents them at one view, as in the following question: "What is God? God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."

This view of the catechism will guide us to the proper mode of teaching it theologically. Our aim in teaching it should be to give the scholars a clear and comprehensive knowledge of what the Scriptures say on every particular doctrine or duty. We are not to neglect the practical uses of the doctrines which it teaches; but our first attention is to be given to a thorough discussion of its contents by the light of the Bible.

We shall take an example of this mode of teaching it from "Dixon's Church Catechism Illustrated."

"What is the last article of the creed respecting our Saviour? From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

The following is the manner in which the question is taught; we give an abstract only:—1. There shall be a day of judgment. Arguments are drawn (1st) from the Old Testament, as 1 Sam. ii, 10: "The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth." Eccles. xii, 14: "God shall bring every work unto judgment;" and (2d) from the New Testament, as Rom. xiv, 10: "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." Heb. ix, 27: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

2. The Lord Jesus Christ shall be judge—2 Tim. iv, 1: "The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead."

3. Why he assumes this office—John v, 27: "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."

4. The manner of his coming—Matt. xvi, 27: "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels."

5. All men shall then be judged—Rev. xx, 12: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God."

6. The accusation—evil thoughts, words, and actions—Rev. xx, 13: "They were judged every man according to their works."

7. The standard—John xii, 48: "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

8. The sentence of the righteous—Matt. xxv, 34: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you."

9. The sentence of the wicked—Mark ix, 44: "Their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched."

Lastly. The application—Ezek. xxii, 14: "Can thine heart endure, or can thy hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee?"

There can be but one opinion, we think, of the value of teaching Scripture doctrine in this manner. We doubt if a catechism, except for young children, should ever be taught without Scripture proofs. It is not what the catechism says, but what the Bible says, that is important. Teachers must be careful of the kind of proofs they adduce. A number of those often found in catechisms are strangely inapplicable.

To this extent, then, and for these purposes, a systematic form of teaching is invaluable; but it must not be allowed to usurp the ground of the other modes of teaching, which, in their own place, are equally important. It is not adapted for the young and ignorant; it cannot supersede Bible history, parables, and conversational teaching: it must be kept to its own sphere at the *end* of a course of instruction, to

reduce into order the materials which had been previously acquired.

In some schools and families the catechism is the principal lesson-book. We have often seen the most advanced catechisms in the hands of children of five and six years of age. They were taught without explanation of any description, the only thing required being accuracy. Indeed, we believe that they are much oftener taught by rote than in any other way. We do not know that a greater affront can be put upon the high character of a work like the Assembly's Catechism, than by teaching it to such young scholars.

That catechisms taught in this way, or even taught *theologically*, are unsuited to the young and ignorant, will appear from the following considerations:—

1. They are very uninteresting. Let any person compare the interest with which a child will read a Bible lesson, and listen to a conversation about religion, with the apathy with which he repeats his catechism, and he will see how foreign the style of the latter is to the child's disposition. A child may be found spontaneously reading the Bible, quoting some of its beautiful sayings, and chanting a hymn; but who ever heard of a child turning to the catechism with interest?

"Many catechisms now in use keep up a continual state of irritation between the teacher and his scholars, on account of their unwillingness to learn them." In a Roman Catholic school, where the Controversial Catechism was taught, in which the answers to the questions are very long, we heard a scholar say, "Teacher, I cannot learn this question, it is so *dreadfully* long. Only allow me to miss it, and I will learn the next one without a word!"

2. The Catechism presents the doctrines of the Bible in a form which renders them almost powerless of moral influence. They are stated with all the precision, indeed, but also with all the calmness of a philosophical treatise. The question, "What is sin? Sin is any want of conformity

unto, or transgression of, the law of God," could not be answered more coldly, so to speak, had it been the definition of a philosophical term. The questions and answers, "Who is the Saviour of sinners? Jesus Christ. Who is it that sanctifies you? The Holy Ghost," are not calculated, except in a very slight degree, to draw the mind of a child up to God. They are essentially dry and cold. We believe a person might read through the greater number of the catechisms which were ever written, without having either his fears or his hopes excited; without feeling his conscience addressed; or being impressed that he had any interest in the numerous questions his eye glanced over. A person might nearly as well plant the dried and systematized specimens of a botanist, and hope that they would grow, as look for much fruit in teaching the catechisms in this way, as a first book to the young.

We do not quarrel with catechisms for wanting the power of attraction. It is in their very nature. They purposely omit all references to individuals, and give only the doctrines in their most general form. But then this abstractness, which is the great merit of the catechism in one point of view, is fatal to its use with the young and uninstructed, unless we make it merely the topic of our remarks, and develop and amplify the thought which it contains.

3. Many portions of our catechisms are unintelligible to children, and cannot be made intelligible in their theological form. For illustration of this head we shall take the doctrine of Justification, as it is taught in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. It is thus expressed:—"Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the sake of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." An intelligent teacher having this doctrine to explain to a child, to whom it was quite new, or to any child who had made little progress in thought or religious knowledge, would take great pains to explain each word

and phrase separately, and would illustrate the meanings of his terms by appropriate examples. He would then expect that the whole sense of the doctrine should be understood. Thus—

Justification would be explained as pardoning—setting free from punishment—treating as if a person had not sinned; and Joseph's conduct to his brethren might be cited for illustration.

Free Grace would be described as unmerited favor—undeserved kindness, like the pardon David granted to Shimei, 2 Sam. xix, 23.

When every difficult word has been carefully explained in this manner, the teacher thinks he has a right to expect that, with ordinary attention, any child shall comprehend the meaning of the whole question, and is very much mortified on discovering how little of it is understood. But is a teacher justified in such an expectation? We think not.

For in the first place, look at the amount of compacted thought which is given to the child's mind to carry at once. He must be able to see at one view (otherwise he will not understand the question) that justification is an *act*, and not a *work;* that this act is of *free grace;* that in this act a person is pardoned, and treated as righteous; that he is so treated because of the righteousness of Christ; that this righteousness consists in what Christ has done and suffered for us; and that it is imputed to us, and we receive it by faith. All these closely connected and theologically expressed ideas, it is supposed, a child may understand by a little pains in explaining the terms. We do not think the expectation very reasonable. Even though the child understood the separate expressions, he might find no small difficulty in passing from one to another, and catching their connection; and though he could even join two sentences together, it would require a much stronger grasp of mind than most young persons possess, to take in at once the whole of this carefully worded doctrine, in which each ex-

pression, by itself, and in its connection, is so significant. Some new ideas they may carry with them about the meaning of particular words; but the doctrine of justification, as a whole, will not be understood. The staple has not a firm enough hold in the soft mind of a child to bear the weight of such a long train of thought.

But, again, it is to be recollected, that the train of thought above mentioned is to be followed by the pupil, though it is expressed in theological language, to which, previous to the explanation of the teacher, he was an entire stranger. Can it be supposed that by one, or by several lessons, the full meanings of such words as *righteousness* and *imputation*, which have exercised the powers of the most learned men, shall be so readily apprehended by a child; that a doctrine, in itself rather abstract, shall be understood when couched in this phraseology? Reason, no less than experience, might disabuse us of such a hope. An example will make the nature of the difficulty better appreciated. Let us substitute Greek words for the terms faith, imputation, &c., and then explain the Greek in the same way that a teacher explains the words faith and imputation to a child. Would a person unacquainted with that language follow our meaning very freely? Make the experiment.

Dikaiosune is an act of God's *charis*, wherein he pardoneth all our *amartia*, and accepteth us as *dikaios* only for the sake of the *dikaiosune* of Christ imputed to us, and received by *pistis* alone. *Dikaiosune* means justification; *charis* means free grace; *amartia*, sin; *dikaios*, righteous; and *pistis*, faith. Will this explanation be sufficient to make the above sentence fully understood? Now, if the reader does not follow this perfectly and easily, how can we expect our children to follow us through all the difficulties of the doctrine of justification, when the words accept, righteousness, imputation, and faith, are as new and difficult to them, as the words *dikaiosune* and *pistis* are to a stranger to the Greek tongue?

But, finally, we doubt very much if young children understand even the *words* justification—act—and act of free grace, by the short explanation which a teacher is able to give of each. Take the word *act*, for instance. It is wanted to show how justification is an *act*, and sanctification a *work*, and what is the difference between the two. As long as the teacher confines himself to his examples, the child understands him. We say striking a blow with a hammer is an *act;* building a house is a *work;* firing a gun is an *act;* mining is a *work*. All this is perfectly intelligible. But when we try the analogy on the doctrines, the scholar fails to apprehend the distinction, simply because he does not know what justification and sanctification are in themselves; and being ignorant of the things themselves, he cannot understand their difference.

We have taken our illustration from the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, not only because it is a celebrated Catechism in itself, but because it is very frequently put into the hands of young children as the first book from which they are to acquire a knowledge of the way of salvation. In many families we believe little else is ever taught.

But in catechisms, written expressly for the *young and ignorant*, the same style of teaching doctrines prevails. Thus, in the "Mother's Catechism *for a Young Child*," by Willison, we have the questions:—

"What is the condition of the covenant of grace? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

"Why is the covenant of grace so called? Because all things in it are of God's free gift, and so even is faith itself, which is the condition required of us for interesting us in Christ, and the benefits of this covenant."

Most other catechisms also abound in similar expressions. We have, "Receiving Christ—having an interest in Christ —Christ fulfilling all righteousness—God receiving satisfaction for our sins," and the like.

It is not the nature of the thought, so much as the form

in which it is presented, that makes these things so difficult to be understood. The doctrine of justification may be made intelligible enough, if we take the proper mode of teaching it. We confuse a child, as we have seen, with unknown terms, when we speak of justification being "an act of God's free grace;" but we shall have his ear at once when we say to him, "You know very well that you have sinned against God: you have, perhaps, spoken bad words, or told a lie—at all events, you have not loved God with your whole heart. It is plain, therefore, that if ever you reach heaven, it will not be because you deserved it, but because God is love." This paraphrase is nearly equivalent in meaning to the words, "Justification is an act of God's free grace."

We think the foregoing reasons sufficiently decisive of the impropriety of putting abstract catechisms into the hands of children at an early age, unless accompanied with very copious illustrations.

We have already expressed our sense of the value of an accurate acquaintance with divinity; but to how many uneducated minds, both men and women, must theology be always incomprehensible. To them anything like clear thinking, exact definitions, or a systematic arrangement, is of little use. Faithful admonitions, direct addresses, and instructions suited to their most pressing necessities, are what they require. It is not in a tempest that we have leisure to discuss the action of the waves or the law of storms.

The evils of confining religious instruction to teaching by catechisms, are greatly aggravated when the questions are learned by rote. How common is a scene like the following:—A teacher asks, "What is sanctification? Sanctification is an act—Stop. What is sanctification? Sanctification is the act—Stop. Is it an act? Sanctification is the *work* of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth—Stop, stop. Try you it, John;" and it is passed from one to another till some one repeats it correctly.

We fear that there is still a vast amount of such teaching. How many children know nothing of the doctrines of revelation, but as the answers to certain questions. When asked, "What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?" they can repeat—"At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity;" but the idea has perhaps never crossed their minds, that there are people now living in the world who shall enjoy the whole of this boundless feast of love; or perhaps they have never understood in the least that—to be raised up in glory—to be acquitted at the judgment—and to be with God forever, was anything more than the words which they were to say when asked the question. Many of them might wonder, on being informed that some questions which they struggle through with so much hesitation, contain glad tidings for them, more valuable than the wealth of the world; tell them how they may know the state of their souls before God; how they may love Christ in the spirit of Paul, and Peter, and John; how they may have every evil passion crushed, and every grace blooming in their souls; and how they may pass the pearly gates of heaven. That the form of sound words which children so often repeat contains truths like these, never enters the minds of multitudes to whom they are most familiar. It is their lesson, which, having committed to memory and repeated, they have nothing more to do with, and for much of this indifference we fear teachers and parents are to blame.

The world understands better how to reach the heart: there is no abstractness in its motives: its lessons of evil are never learned by rote: there is nothing dry, formal, or technical in its temptations; they are all direct, personal, practical. Even a child understands the way to seduce his neighbor. We never heard one boy say to another, Come, and let us sin; or, Come, and let us break one of the com-

mandments; or even, Come, and let us steal. Such invitations to evil he knows would be powerless. But he tells his companion of an orchard down the way, that the wall is low, the family from home, the fruit ripe, and that the trees are laden with fruit, which will never be missed; and thus he tempts him to sin. Why should the same intelligent principle not be acted upon to counteract such temptations? We believe it must have been a rare case in which a child has been moved to any duty, or deterred from any sin, by reading or repeating the abstract questions taught in our catechisms. The definition, "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God," will be but a feeble barrier in a child's way when the passions are loose; and few precepts have ever been observed from merely knowing that "the duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to his revealed will." Religion can never influence the heart or the life unless it is taught intelligently and practically; and there is not a doctrine in the Bible which is not intended to be taught in this manner.

Note.—It will be observed that the Catechisms on which our author animadverts, were written before Sunday-schools were known, and when the true principles of instructing the young were not so well understood as they now are. The new Catechisms of the Methodist Episcopal Church have been prepared with the special design of adapting them, as fully as the nature of the subject admits, to the comprehension and tastes of children. ED.

READING.

TEACHERS are apt to undervalue the influence of the simple reading of the Word in school, and to attribute too much to their own instructions. Now, though there are difficulties in the Scriptures, and we read them under all the disadvantages of a translation, such is their mingled simplicity and majesty, that no modern work written for children has the same power to arrest attention and reach the heart. The

stories of the creation—of the flood—of the cities of the plain—of Moses and Daniel—Elijah and Elisha—and, above all, of Jesus Christ, are milk for babes, as much as they are meat for men. A child at first may meet with many words, sentences, and peculiarities which are unintelligible; he may not understand what the firmament was, nor that Pharaoh was a general name for the kings of Egypt, nor how Darius came to the throne of Assyria; but the *moral* of the history will reach him almost unclouded.

The following observations have reference to the reading of a Bible lesson.

1. Teach children the habit of reading the Bible *correctly* and fluently. With good readers, this is easily secured; but as many of the children attending school have a partial education, it requires attention on the part of the teacher to make them always read *as well as they are able.* Few teachers are so careful as they might be. Thus, it is a very common reading with children, instead of, "Nor sitteth in the *scorner's* chair," "Nor sitteth in the *corner* chair." A careless teacher will find his readers deteriorating rather than improving.

2. "To assist backward scholars, when difficult words occur, give the correct pronunciation of them at once, and do not suffer the scholar first to miscall them two or three times."

3. When a sentence has been read imperfectly, the teacher should read it aloud, and make the scholar read it again.

4. "Always join," says Mr. Collins, "in the reading lessons. The careful and distinct manner in which you read; the proper emphasis which you put on the more important words; the change of tone which you adopt when the language of different individuals is introduced; your constant observance of the several pauses, and the general adaptation of your style to the varied subjects as they occur, will do more to produce good readers in a Sunday-school class,

than a multitude of elaborate lectures on the art of reading." We may add that, by joining in the reading lesson, the teacher will promote the *fellowship* of the class.

COMMITTING TO MEMORY.

A WELL-FURNISHED memory is only second to a well-furnished understanding. Knowledge is the raw material of wisdom; and, other things being equal, he who knows most may have the largest amount of wisdom. Lessons are not the chief channel by which the memory is supplied with information, but they are an important auxiliary which should not be neglected, especially in a religious education. The texts of the Bible are the most solemn words we can employ in admonition, the most powerful in instruction, the most tender as promises, and the most soothing in consolation; they are the most devout words we can use in addressing our Maker, the first that spring to a Christian's lips in warning a sinner, and the softest he can whisper into the ear of the saint as he takes his flight to heaven. We know not if the songs of angels can be much sweeter than some passages of the Bible.

The best season for committing Scripture to memory is in youth. Very few will ever become intimately acquainted with the texts of the Bible whose memories have not been stored with them at an early period. Many eminent Christians have had reason all their lives to regret their neglect of a vigorous and persevering effort to commit portions of the Bible to memory when they were young, a neglect for which no subsequent diligence could atone.

We do not think that the passages of the Bible which are committed to memory are always very judiciously selected. We have known some who have attempted to learn off the whole Bible, beginning at Genesis. In a number of schools the historical books of the New Testament are prescribed as

tasks to be repeated. We think there is a great want of judgment in all such lessons. What advantage is it to a child that he can repeat the words, "After these things, Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias?" All the precepts, promises, and weighty moral and religious sentiments of Scripture ought to be committed to memory before learning to repeat a verse like the following: "And as they spake unto the people, the priest, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them."

The portions of the Bible most suitable to be committed to memory, are portions of the Psalms and the book of Proverbs, a number of chapters in the Prophecies, and large portions of the discourses of Christ, and of the epistles. There are also proofs of doctrine—precepts—promises—admonitions—and an almost infinite number of exquisitely beautiful texts expressive of every pure emotion, and of all the relations man bears to his God, to eternity, or to his fellow-creatures.

We recommend teachers, as far as possible, to make the children remember the book, chapter, and verse, from which the different passages are taken. The hymns which children commit to memory should be carefully selected; all babyish verses should be excluded; the distinction between childish and child-like hymns is very great. It is not enough that the hymn pleases at the moment; it should have enough of meaning to make it worth preserving in all future time. Such hymns as, "Around the throne of God in heaven," "Jesus, Lord of life and glory," "I think when I read that sweet story of old," and many hymns adapted to maturer years, possess undying interest.

Many sacred poems unfit for singing may be committed to memory, such as Montgomery's poem on Prayer.

Although we cannot easily over-estimate the importance of an extensive acquaintance with the words of holy writ and religious poetry, we do not think that much of the time

of a teacher ought to be occupied with hearing children repeat their tasks. Yet for want of due care, some teachers do little else; they allow their scholars to bring as many texts as they are able to learn, on any subject they choose; or they give each child his own separate task; or they hear every one repeat the whole of the lesson committed.

Now, it must be recollected that the principal exercise of the Sabbath-school is direct conversational instruction by the teacher, and that the chief reason why the teacher hears his children repeat their lessons is, to secure their learning them at home. A mere task-hearer is a very inferior order of teacher. Whatever plans can be devised by which the labor of the teacher may be abridged, and yet the tasks thoroughly learned, should be employed.

Both of these objects may be gained by giving every scholar in the class the same task, and by hearing them repeat the verses of the chapter or hymn committed alternately. It is a great waste of time to hear every child repeat all he has learned. If care be taken not to allow the children to know what parts of the lesson each will have to say, they will learn the whole as thoroughly as if each one had to say it all.

Long lessons are objectionable, as they are seldom well learned. It is of no use to give a child a whole chapter to repeat, which he blunders through by the help of the whispers of his companions, and the aid of the teacher. Let the hymn or texts assigned be such as can be learned without any great effort, and then let there be an imperative command that what is given shall be thoroughly prepared. We have known scholars repeatedly absent themselves from school from their inability to learn well the tasks appointed.

It will be found a great help to the children to explain the lesson which they are to commit before prescribing it: the judgment is a great help to the memory. It is best to show a child the importance of a passage first, and then say to him, This is worth keeping. We never think

of preserving anything till we know something of its value.

This principle is particularly applicable to *catechisms*. Instead of making a child repeat a difficult question, and then explaining its meaning, we should explain the meaning first. By this plan, the committing of a catechism to memory would be a much less laborious task than it is at present.

Where children are unable to read, or are only able to read imperfectly, they may be taught with considerable ease to repeat a number of texts by *oral* teaching. Thus, John vi, 35: "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Here we should first repeat the whole verse, and then ask the children to say the first clause, "I am the bread of life." When they have repeated this clause two or three times, we may then give them the second; after that, the two clauses; then the third; and last of all, the whole verse. One or two texts may be taught in this way every Sabbath to very young children; so that before they are able to read, they may have a great many texts in their memory. They will also have been drilled by this plan into the practice of applying their minds to instruction.

A proper enunciation must be enforced in the repetition of lessons. Instead of allowing the children to hurry through their tasks, or drawl them out in a sing-song tone, they should be taught to repeat them slowly, seriously, and with due regard to the pauses and meaning. If the teacher will read the lessons aloud in a proper manner the preceding Sabbath, making the children read them after him, it will teach them a good mode of recitation.

"Be particular to make the scholars always repeat such words as Christ, God, the Lord, the Holy Ghost, with great solemnity."

Above all, be careful to make the children commit their lessons to memory very thoroughly. This rule is very much

neglected. Perhaps a few verses of a hymn have been given as an exercise, of which the children can repeat the first verse very well; the second they stammer through; and the remainder they cannot say at all. Now, let us see the evils resulting from such careless teaching. In the first place, the teacher accustoms his class to *habitual disobedience*. He has prescribed a certain task to be learned; it is not learned; and yet the neglect is passed with perhaps scarcely a word of comment. When the children are taught disobedience in one thing, they will not be slow to apply the principle to everything else.

Then again, the scholars, from such ill-prepared lessons being accepted, set up for themselves a very low standard of excellence. When such imperfect repetition is allowed to pass unchallenged, their minds fall into a dull, listless mood, which turns with something like indignation from any attempt to enforce a higher style of execution. When we accustom a class to such a low standard of merit, we do them a great injury, and doom them in a manner to mediocrity.

And moreover, we are wasting our own and our children's time; the verses they learn are not engraven on the tablet of their memories; they are written in sand, to be swept away like the traveler's foot-prints in the desert by the passing wind.

Now, what ought to be done, and done with consistency and perseverance, is, in the first place, to require no more than what the children can learn; and then, secondly, to exact the most perfect attention to what we do prescribe. Some teachers, by using energetic means, have taught their scholars to go over their whole lesson without a blunder. No stopping and stammering should be allowed; no laborious straining for the catchword of the question, or the rhyme of the Psalms. What is learned should be learned thoroughly, or not at all. It is better to give one solitary verse which shall be perfectly remembered, than any number of which the vague impression dies away with the lesson.

INFANT CLASSES.

The claims of infants, that is, of children under five or six years of age, have been little heeded until of late; and even yet a very small proportion of such children are under religious instruction. The difficulty of providing suitable teachers, and sufficient accommodation for them, may account in part for this neglect; but the chief reason is our tendency to slight an evil which is not forced upon our attention. We see and hear the wickedness of older children; while the less obtrusive, but no less real depravity of infants is forgotten. Yet a very little consideration will convince us that they have equal claims on our Christian benevolence.

1. While young children have the same sins and evil nature as when they grow older, the longer they are untaught they become the worse. There is a great difference between an uninstructed child at the age of four, and of six. Sin cannot hold empire over a spirit for two years without leaving dark traces of his desolating power. It is usual to speak of "the passions sleeping in infancy's breast," but the saying must be taken with great reserve; indeed, the passions are the first portions of our nature that come into action; hope and fear, joy and sorrow, love and hatred, soon display their power. If these passions, for the first six years of life, have been unchecked and uninstructed, they have acquired prodigious strength. During all that time,

> "The souls whom God is calling sunward,
> Live on blindly in the dark."

We once saw a little boy, about three years of age, go up to a stand of sweetmeats on the street, watch his opportunity while the owner's head was turned, and snatch away some lozenges: his countenance showed all the while that he knew he was sinning. What would that boy be at six, if left to himself?

2. Christianity can be taught to children at a very early

age. Whatever a person can hate, he can love; and whatever he can love, he can hate. The *morality*, then, of the Bible, can be taught to the youngest child; its truthfulness, its humility, its purity, and its meek and quiet spirit. The benefit of early instruction we once saw exemplified in a girl about four years of age. She had been amusing herself with some books from a book-case, and left them lying on the floor. I said to her, "You had better put these books into the case." She looked at them very reluctantly, and then at the comfortable seat she occupied. At length a bright smile glanced over her face, and jumping down, she said, "I know I ought, and so I will."

But the peculiar *doctrines* of Christianity can be taught as easily as its morality. What is there in the doctrines of the power, wisdom, holiness, and goodness of God, that would prevent an infant from catching at least a ray of their excellence? That heaven is a place of sinless happiness, and hell a region of unspeakable woe, and that out of love to us Jesus Christ died, are doctrines very easily taught; and they are as potent to repress an evil, and animate a good spirit in a child, as at a later period of life.

3. Many children *die in infancy*. Infancy is death's harvest. If we neglect all children below six years of age, a large number of the young will never be instructed, and will pass out of a Christian country into eternity without once naming the name of God, or hearing the Saviour's voice.

We shall in the remainder of this chapter give some directions for conducting infant classes.

1. They should meet in a room by themselves. The kind of teaching and discipline they require renders this imperative.

2. A few of the infant-school exercises may be adopted, such as rising up and sitting down, and marching round the room. They should be resorted to sparingly, and noise should be forbidden.

3. The lessons should consist chiefly of *narratives*, and

of questions with short but pertinent answers. We think parents are often happier in the way of teaching their children in infancy, than when they are able to read. The Bible lesson which a child receives on his father's knee is relished, as much as anything he hears. The delightful stories of the Bible have an unfailing attraction for them. It is when an artificial system of teaching is introduced, and the religious lesson becomes a task, that it is disliked.

4. The importance of narrative lessons to young children does not consist in the inferences which they draw from them, but in *the moral feelings which the narrative excites.* For example, if you describe the *creation* to children, it is sufficient, if it has been so described as to make them *feel* the power and wisdom of God; and it is of little consequence though, on being asked, What does it teach? they should be unable to say, that it teaches us his power, or his wisdom. In our early years our moral education is chiefly carried on by *sympathy.* If we wish a child to be holy, we must set before him objects and examples fitted to awaken his moral sensibilities. How admirably is the gospel suited to this state of mind. "The love of Christ constraineth us," is the language of children as much as of adults.

5. The lessons of infant classes should be taught in a *conversational* manner. The teacher, in telling his Bible story, should talk in a familiar tone, intermix his narrative with a great many questions to keep the children attentive, and go back repeatedly over the names of people, and what they did, to carry their minds along with him. He may calculate on a great amount of inattention.

6. The same lessons may be repeated very often. On first hearing a story, a child exhausts a very small portion of its interest: he will ask for it almost twenty times, and hear it every time with increasing relish. We have an analogy to this in our relish for tunes. A first hearing merely enables us to determine whether a tune will please or not; and not till it is familiar do we entirely love it.

7. The children may be allowed to answer *simultaneously;* a mode less frequently to be practiced when they grow older. This ought not to exclude a great deal of individual catechising.

8. Religion should be taught to them *authoritatively.* It is not necessary to prove everything to infants. Let us give them the truth, and leave it to its own natural influence. Children are of a confiding disposition, and we shall best cultivate this natural faith by exercise. They must be told that the Bible is the word of God; that God punishes sinners; and that the good only are saved, without a suspicion being whispered to them that any one doubts the truth of these statements, or even attempting to show that they are true. This implicit confidence of children, so natural and graceful, must not be confounded and condemned with the blind faith of an ignorant adult. When children have grown a little older, it will be time enough to show how strong are the evidences, and how impregnable the bulwarks of religion.

9. Short sentences may be committed to memory, as, God is light—God is a spirit—Love one another, and hymns, such as "The happy land."

10. We think an hour long enough for one meeting. As much will be learned in one hour as in two.

11. Allowance must be made for the volatility of young children. Their transitions from one mood to another are far more rapid than those of adults. This is true of them up to the age of manhood. The younger the child, the more volatile he is; tears and smiles chase each other on his face; he yields himself without restraint to the feeling of the moment; his mind is like an Æolian harp, the strings of which, being moved by a blind impulse, sound independent of each other; he cares nothing for consistency; a merry tale will turn his crying into laughter. The staidness of maturity must, therefore, neither be expected nor desired. When we see the children of a Sabbath school on dismission running home with light hearts, and perhaps with some

unseemly mirth, it is unreasonable to conclude that our instructions have been utterly lost: let us recollect they are children, and not men and women.

SENIOR CLASSES.

Senior classes, of one kind or another, have been common in the church almost from the beginning of Christianity; but, until the establishment of Sabbath schools, they were confined, in a great measure, to the children of pious parents, and to such young persons as were desirous of connecting themselves with the church. The Sabbath school proposes to embrace all the young men and young women of the community in its senior classes.

The number of youths between the ages of fourteen and twenty in Great Britain, is about two millions. From this number let us deduct one-half for those whose education is completed, or whose employments may prevent them from being scholars, and we have the large number of one million suitable for senior classes. Should we assign *thirty* scholars to each teacher, above thirty thousand teachers would be required for instructing them. We question if one-fourth of a million are now attending senior classes.

No question is oftener asked, or is asked more anxiously, than the question, What is to be done for our senior scholars? They leave us at the age when it is most dangerous to forsake the school, and when it is most beneficial to attend it; just when the slumbering passions, over which we have so long kept watch and ward, are awakening to new vigor, they break loose from our care, in too many instances never to return.

1. One cause of the disinclination of lads and young women to attend Sabbath school, is the prevalent misconception that it is designed for children only. A false shame, on this account, is very widely diffused, inducing a great

many to forsake the school about the age of fourteen or fifteen. But though the feeling is so general, we have no reason to consider it inveterate; it has not enough of rationality about it to enable it to resist a well-directed assault. The time of life when the supposed incompatibility of attending begins is entirely arbitrary. The same girl who leaves the Sabbath school because she is too old or too big to attend it, has no objections to the minister's class; and the lad, who thinks it beneath him to be a scholar on the Sabbath, will attend church, lectures on religion, or a week-evening class, without difficulty. Now, there is no reason in itself why more shame should be felt in attending a class on Sabbath, than one on a week-day; or in learning religious lessons, than writing or arithmetic. Since the prejudice, therefore, is so unfounded and unintelligent, we do not think it is at all insurmountable.

2. The new-born sense of independence, which at this age begins to show itself, is another great obstacle to attendance. Young persons begin to work, to act for themselves, to receive and spend wages; and, as they are casting off domestic restraints, they become impatient of those of the school. They are also more sensitive to reproof and remark than formerly; and, while passing from the boy to the man, or from the girl to the woman, and uncertain of the exact position in which they stand, they resent the exercise of authority more keenly than when they are either younger or older. Young persons who leave school at fifteen, will sometimes return voluntarily and cheerfully a few years later, lamenting their fault.

3. The natural disinclination of the heart to religious truth, is another reason why the school is abandoned. At the age of fifteen young persons begin to see the practical character of religion; that it interferes with their passions, and condemns many of the practices in which they, or those they associate with, indulge; and that the school not only breaks in upon the time which their companions devote to

the Sabbath excursion, but forbids and condemns their vices. They feel, therefore, that a choice must be made; that they can no longer serve both God and the world; and their desire is too often against the truth.

4. The want of superior teachers is a fourth reason why young people forsake school. Teaching by rote, task lessons, and mere earnestness, are no longer attractive enough for thinking youths. They need something as practical as what they find in books, newspapers, and society; and unless *real* knowledge is communicated to them, we cannot be surprised at their leaving school: it requires a very superior style of teaching to interest senior scholars.

As a means of increasing the number of senior classes, we make the following suggestions.

1. Their importance should be frequently pressed upon the church. No *teacher* requires to be convinced of their value; but how many church-goers are nearly ignorant of their importance. A *feeling* in their favor requires to be created. The pulpit, and the general religious literature, as well as the Sabbath-school literature, should take up their claims. The *conscience* of the church should be aroused on their behalf.

2. The movement will be greatly aided by the increase of ministers' classes. Were all ministers to become as faithful as some now are, we should soon secure the attendance of all the young people who attend church. Many, who will attend the pastor's class, will receive instruction from no one else. By this means we should break down the improper feeling that obtains on the subject. Young persons would not be singular in attending a Sabbath class; and the temptation from careless companions would be greatly lessened. Once let it be the *custom* to attend, and the rest is easy. In some districts in the north of Scotland, and in some of the manufacturing villages, almost half of the scholars are above fifteen years of age.

3. A superior class of teachers should be provided. Se-

nior scholars require a teacher who will make them think, to whom they cannot imagine themselves superior, whose mind possesses *power*, and who can adapt himself to the new views that are opening up to them. Any teacher of moderate abilities and acquirements, who will devote himself to his class, will do much good; but the higher his attainments are, we may expect that his teaching will be proportionally attractive.

4. Separate rooms for the senior classes. A teacher may have twice as many pupils in a room, occupied by his class alone, as in a miscellaneous school. This is one advantage of a separate room. It tends also to remove the feeling of shame in being associated with younger children.

5. A more efficient management of the junior classes. If children are brought to school at an early age, and they are carefully watched, until their attendance in school becomes a fixed habit, they will pass into the senior classes without much difficulty.

But no plan will succeed at once. Senior classes can only become popular, as Sabbath-schools have become popular, by persevering effort. Many of our best Christian schemes are frustrated in consequence of our affixing a too limited period for trial. Although senior classes may not become general in the course of a few years, it is no reason for questioning their ultimate prosperity. If in ten years we do not succeed in making them universal, let the church persevere for twenty or forty years, and it must finally triumph. It is not so much a grand effort that will be successful, as the united force of a multitude of agencies.

Yet almost any teacher may secure the attendance of a good adult class, in present circumstances, if he will take the requisite pains. Let him be studious and prayerful in his preparations, and punctual in his attendance; let his teaching be thorough, practical, and spiritual; let him forward, to the best of his power, the temporal interests of his scholars—mark out for them a course of reading—speak

to them frankly when he meets them—and visit them when ill or absent; and, in almost any circumstances, a good class may be collected and retained.

In directing attention to the mode of teaching a senior class, we have in view those youths whose education entitles them to a superior style of teaching.

1. The teaching should be *intellectual*. We have been painfully impressed with the want of thought in much of the teaching bestowed upon intelligent senior classes. The style of examination, of illustration, and of reasoning, is sometimes no higher than in a junior Bible class. Now, at the age which we suppose the members of a senior class have reached, there is a great amount of mental activity; the reason begins to act with vigor; there is an earnest search after principles, causes, and evidence; they are indisposed to accept information on trust; and the question, Why? is asked as often as the question, What? The instructions should be adapted to these mental cravings. We shall illustrate these remarks by one or two examples.

One of the subjects with which an adult class requires to be familiar is, the Evidences of Christianity. When young persons leave their father's house unacquainted with the evidences of religion, they are exposed to great temptations from infidelity; and the edifice which has been reared at home with great labor, may be overthrown in a moment through the insufficiency of its out-works. Besides, there are a number of difficulties attending religion, which arise to the mind in the speculative period of youth, and which may settle into permanent doubts, unless they are removed. These doubts cannot be put down with the strong hand of authority; they require to be met in a kindly spirit. Most of the objections to religion found in books or society, occur less or more to every person of meditation; and it is just because these doubts had a previous existence in our own minds, that they are so formidable when openly ex-

pressed. When these objections have been answered, they become additional arguments for the truth.

A senior class should, therefore, be made acquainted with the evidences of the authenticity and divine origin of the Scriptures. The line of proof, which may be found in any common work on the subject, is the following:—The existence of the Old Testament can be traced from the time of Christ back to the age when it was translated into Greek, two hundred years before Christ, and to the time of Ezra, when the different books were collected and arranged. The existence of the New Testament in the first and second centuries, can be proved by the numerous quotations from it in ancient authors. The inspiration of the Scriptures can be established by evidence equally conclusive. Fulfilled prophecy, miracles, the transforming influence of the gospel, and its revelations of the character of God, and of a future state, are proofs so strong as to leave nothing to be desired to make them more complete. Now, we expect that teachers shall make their scholars acquainted with the nature and the details of this proof, and thus enable them to "render a reason for the hope that is in them."

The Lord's Supper will form the subject of our second example. The following ideas should be communicated to a senior class in connection with this sacred rite. They should be made acquainted with its origin, its true nature, as illustrated by the circumstances in which it was first instituted, and the manner in which it was observed by the apostles. They should be taught how much is implied in partaking of the Supper, and the obligation of every believer to show forth the Lord's death. The corruptions which have been imposed upon the Lord's Supper, and their contrariety to Scripture and common sense, should be exposed, and a number of minor particulars should be mentioned regarding it, such as the date of the first supper—its similarity, in some respects, to the paschal feast—and the different names by which it is known.

Our last illustration shall be taken from the doctrine of a future state. The following subjects, in connection with this doctrine, should be considered by an adult class:—The immortality of the soul; the proofs of its immortality derived from Scripture; the unscriptural nature of the belief entertained by some, that the soul sleeps with the body; the baseless doctrine of purgatory; the nature of the resurrection, and its connection with the resurrection of Christ; the spirituality of the bodies which the saints shall possess, and their eternal felicity. These are intended merely as specimens of the mode of treating the lessons of a senior class.

The style of the reflections introduced into a Scripture narrative should partake of the same character. Thus, Acts xvii, 16: "Now, while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." To a young class we could do no more than point out here the zeal of Paul as an example; but we might show to senior scholars from this passage, the benevolent spirit of Christianity as illustrated in the person of the apostle. We should always lead them back to great principles.

The exercises and essays prescribed to senior scholars should also require some thought. They might be required to answer such questions as the following:—Why does the Bible not contain a systematic view of religion? What is the province of reason in religion? What were the marks of an apostle? When was the Gospel of Matthew written, and in what language?

It is an excellent exercise to assign senior scholars suitable subjects for essays, commencing with simple narratives; as the powers of thought and composition advance, making them more difficult. The essays should be short.

Senior scholars should be encouraged to purchase a Bible-dictionary and a Concordance. If they can provide themselves with a Commentary also, it would be profitable.

2. Senior scholars should be carefully instructed in *their duty to the world*. No part of Christian morality has been less inculcated than this. While we have been taught to read the word of God, to pray, to be honest and pure-hearted, we have not been sufficiently initiated into the spirit of that love which Jesus bore in his bosom when he came to save a lost world. Many Christians who understand that they are the salt of the earth, forget that they are the light of the world. In ancient times it was the custom of persons of every rank to teach their children a trade; so it ought to be our uniform practice to train up our children to occupy some active post in the Church. They should be educated to do good. They should never be permitted to imagine that their talents or acquirements are to terminate on themselves. The idea of worldly prosperity and personal advancement, should be constantly subordinated to means and opportunities of benefiting mankind. They should be taught, that their mission in the world is the same as that of the apostles; that the extension of Christ's kingdom, and the salvation of sinners, is as much their business as the business of any minister or teacher; that they are under the same obligations to be zealous in this cause, as to be honest or truthful; and that, as it is the highest work on earth, it has the highest reward in heaven. Were a generation of children trained up to these duties, it would soon change the face of society.

3. The teachers of senior classes may benefit their scholars by suitable advices regarding the books they ought to read, their choice of a profession, their amusements, and their associates. Many valuable suggestions may be insinuated on these subjects in the course of teaching. One sin against which they should be most carefully guarded, is the sin of drunkenness. Could our youths be induced in a body to abstain from intoxicating liquors altogether, more would be effected, we believe, towards the moral elevation of this country, than by any other means, the influ-

ence of the gospel excepted.* It is one objection to a mixed class of both sexes, that there are several subjects on which we cannot speak so frankly as if they were separate.

We have, perhaps, set up a standard somewhat higher than is generally to be found among senior classes. There is a large number of classes where, from a defective education, the style of teaching cannot be raised much higher than that of an ordinary Bible class. We refer our readers to the previous chapters on teaching for the mode of instructing such young people.

Three observations may be borne in mind. First. The members of a senior class should not be treated like children. There is a respect due to a young man or woman, which every person of right feeling will be ready to pay. We do not like to see them required to rise up when they answer questions, to hear them repeating hymns and catechisms like children, or to see their slightest motions watched with the care requisite in an infant class. The teacher should recognize the new position which they occupy, and deal with them as with persons who are able to appreciate motives, and in whom a certain amount of independency of thought and action is becoming.

Secondly. The reasoning powers of uneducated youths, if they can be called into exercise, though sluggish, are considerably stronger than those of even lively children. They grow even while sleeping. For this reason, when their slumbering powers are awakened, we may make our instructions correspondingly intelligent.

Thirdly. Young men and women being engaged in the actual business of life, the manner in which we enjoin obedience, love, and faith upon a child, is unsuited to them.

* We trust that the principles of total abstinence are so prevalent in the United States, that Sunday-school teachers will have but little difficulty in securing from their scholars entire and willing conformity to them. It is infinitely to be regretted that the temperance reformation has not made greater progress, and obtained a firmer foot-hold, in Great Britain.—Ed.

They have a wider range of duty; they have greater responsibilities; their passions are more vehement; deeper interests are connected with them; on all these accounts, the gospel must be exhibited with a breadth and fullness corresponding to the new life on which they have entered.

It is an affecting circumstance connected with a senior class, that its members are at the most perilous stage of life. The statistics of crime establish the mournful fact, that more crimes are committed between the ages of fifteen and twenty, than during any other period of five years. The proportion is increasing yearly. The number of convictions in England, in the year 1846, was 25,000, of which 6,236 consisted of criminals between the ages of fifteen and twenty. Where are now some of those happy faces that once sat so cheerfully under our care, and to whom we broke the bread of life? There are not a few who are walking in the footsteps of the saints; but some are wandering outcasts; some, in jails and prisons, are suffering for their crimes; and some in banishment and shame will lay their bones in a foreign land. Where is that young man of whom we augured so much from his talents and amiability; and that young woman, to whose cheek sprang so readily the blush of innocence? Were they in their graves, it might be well with them. But who is that victim of debauchery and drunkenness? Who is that disheveled creature, in whose haggard cheek there is not a trace of her former beauty? Sabbath-school teachers—teachers of youth, be faithful; do not withdraw your warnings and instructions too soon; many a fair appearance is "the torrent's smoothness ere it dash below." The fate of your scholars, even now, trembles in the balance; slacken your efforts, and all your instructions may be lost. O labor and pray without ceasing, till Christ be formed in your scholars' hearts the hope of glory!

ENCOURAGEMENTS.

Religious instruction is attended with numerous discouragements. Children are often unamiable and unteachable, and are neither to be ruled by love nor fear. The impression of one Sabbath is effaced by the next; and sometimes those who had seemed not far from the kingdom of heaven, fall a prey to temptation, and make shipwreck of the faith. This apparent want of fruit is one of the most severe trials of the teacher, and tempts him "to grow weary in well doing," either because he fears success is hopeless, or that he is unfit for his duties.

The grand motives by which we should be actuated in doing good, are the command of God, and the love of Christ, irrespective of the results of our efforts; but it might give more cheerfulness to the instructions of our teachers if they labored in the sure hope, that whether success is visible or not, good to man and glory to God have been the results of their exertions. If they have not stopped the chariot of sin, they have at least hung as a dead weight on the wheels.

1. Visible success is not a certain test of real usefulness. The man who lays the foundation-stone of a bridge, has as much honor as he who puts in the key-stone; and the teacher who imparts the first elements of religion to a child, is influencing his destiny as much as he who has the privilege of beholding his conversion. The sunshine of May and June is as necessary to ripen the harvest as the sunshine of July and August.

It may be confidently affirmed, that truth is never spoken in vain. It may not effect the direct purpose for which it was spoken, but it cannot die; though buried for centuries, like the wheat found in the mummies of Egypt, it will one day bear its yellow harvest. God's care of the church is not less than his care of the world. There is not a drop of rain ever lost: it may fall into no running stream, and

moisten no drooping flower; but though it fall in the heart of the burning desert it is not lost; for it is caught up by the winged winds to fall as dew or rain till the end of time. It is the same with truth. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Let the following illustration be considered.

"I was standing by the side of my mother, under the spacious porch of Dr. Beattie's church, Glasgow, awaiting the hour for afternoon service, when I observed two young men turn a corner and walk towards the church. They were dressed in their working-clothes, unshaven and dirty, and slightly intoxicated. As they passed the church door they assumed a swaggering, irreverent gait, laughed, and finally commenced singing a profane song. My mother turned to me, and said, 'Follow these two men, and invite them to a seat in our pew.'

"I soon overtook them, and delivered my mother's message. One laughed scornfully, and began to swear; the other paused and pondered; he was evidently struck with the nature of the invitation. His companion again swore, and was about to drag him away. But he still paused. I repeated the invitation, and in a few seconds he looked in my face and said, 'When I was a boy like you, I went to church every Sunday. I have not been inside of a church for three years. *I don't feel right.* I believe I will go with you.' I seized his hand, and led him back to the house of God, in spite of the remonstrances and oaths of his companion. A most excellent sermon was preached from Eccles. xi, 1: 'Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.' The young man was attentive, but seemed abashed and downcast.

"At the conclusion of the service my mother kindly said to him, 'Have you a Bible, young man?'—'No, ma'am; but I can get one,' was his reply. 'You can read, of

course?' said she. 'Yes, ma'am.'—'Well, take my son's Bible until you procure one of your own, and come to meeting again next Lord's day. I will always be happy to accommodate you with a seat.'

"He put the Bible in his pocket, and hurried away. At family worship that evening, my mother prayed fervently for the conversion of that young man.

"Next Sunday came, and the next, but the stranger did not appear. My mother frequently spoke of him, and appeared grieved at his absence. He had doubtless been the subject of her closet devotions. On the third Sabbath morning, while the congregation were singing the first psalm, the young man again entered our pew. He was now dressed genteelly, and appeared thin and pale, as if from recent sickness. Immediately after the benediction, the stranger laid my Bible on the desk, and left the house, without giving my mother an opportunity she much desired, of conversing with him. On one of the blank leaves of the Bible we found some writing in pencil, signed 'W. C.' He asked to be remembered in my mother's prayers.

"Years rolled on; my mother passed to her heavenly rest; I grew up to manhood, and the stranger was forgotten.

"In the autumn of 18—, the ship St. George, of which I was the medical officer, anchored in Table Bay.

"Next day, being Sabbath, I attended morning service at the Wesleyan Chapel. At the conclusion of worship, a gentleman seated behind me, asked to look at my Bible. In a few minutes he returned it, and I walked into the street. I had arranged to dine at the 'George,' and was mounting the steps in front of that hotel, when the gentleman who had examined my Bible laid his hand on my shoulder and begged to have a few minutes' conversation. We were shown into a private apartment. As soon as we were seated, he examined my countenance with great attention, and then began to sob; tears rolled down his cheeks; he was evidently laboring under some intense emotion.

He asked me several questions—my name, age, occupation, birth-place, &c. He then inquired if I had not, when a boy, many years ago, invited a drunken Sabbath-breaker to a seat in Dr. Beattie's church. I was astonished—the subject of my mother's anxiety and prayers was before me. Mutual explanations and congratulations followed, after which Mr. C. gave me a short history of his life.

"He was born in the town of Leeds, of highly respectable and religious parents, who gave him a good education, and trained him up in the way of righteousness. When about fifteen years of age, his father died, and his mother's straitened circumstances obliged her to take him from school, and put him to learn a trade. In his new situation he imbibed all manner of evil, became incorrigibly vicious, and broke his mother's heart. Freed now from all parental restraint, he left his employers and traveled to Scotland. In the city of Glasgow he had lived and sinned for two years, when he was arrested in his career through my mother's instrumentality. On the first Sabbath of our strange interview, he confessed that after he left church he was seized with pangs of unutterable remorse. The sight of a mother and a son worshiping God together, recalled the happy days of his own boyhood, when he went to church and Sunday-school, and when he also had a mother—a mother whose latter days he had embittered, and whose gray hairs he had brought with sorrow to the grave. His mental suffering threw him on a bed of sickness—from which he arose a changed man. He returned to England, cast himself at the feet of his maternal uncle, and asked and obtained forgiveness. With his uncle's consent he studied for the ministry; and on being ordained, he entered the missionary field, and had been laboring for several years in Southern Africa.

"'The moment I saw your Bible this morning,' he said, 'I recognized it. And now, do you know who was my companion on the memorable Sabbath you invited me to church? He was the notorious Jack Hill, who was hanged about a

year afterwards for highway robbery. I was dragged from the very brink of infamy and destruction, and saved as a brand from the burning. You remember Dr. Beattie's text on the day of my salvation:—'Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.'"

2. A small proportion of the conversions effected by the instrumentality of the Sabbath-school, is known to its teachers. We are far from claiming for the Sabbath-school the merit of the conversion of all its scholars who are converted. Bibles, Christian friends, religious works, and the preaching of the gospel, may have had equal or superior influence over them, but the numerous conversions which may be traced directly to the Sabbath-school, entitle us to conclude, that there are many others whom the judgment day alone shall reveal. They are seen as yet only like the first stars which appear on the brow of eve, as the day wanes, but they shall be seen hereafter like the starry host in the noon of night, shining in the firmament forever and ever.

A few years ago, a teacher in England on his death-bed, lamented to a Christian friend, that though he had been a teacher for twenty-four years, he had seen no fruit from his instructions. He died. His friend, being in another part of England, shortly afterwards was asked by a gentleman, if he was acquainted with Mr. ——? naming the departed teacher. On being told of his death, he said feelingly, "It was through his instructions that I was brought to the knowledge of Christ."

3. Success, we believe, is always in proportion to exertion. Whitefield's astonishing influence may have been much greater than that of others who were equally devoted; but had he abated one degree of his fervent zeal, there would have been a proportionate decrease in his influence. Were every teacher imbued with his spirit, or with the spirit of M'Cheyne of Dundee, Harlan Page, Thomas Cranfield, or Sarah Martin, the wilderness and the solitary place would

be glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. The following is a valuable example of successful teaching; it is from Mr. Watson's work on Senior Classes.

"A senior class was formed more than twenty years since in the neighborhood of London; it was composed of youths, whose conduct, as they advanced in years, gave great concern to the teachers, and caused anxious thought as to what could be done to promote their welfare, and at the same time preserve the discipline of the school. They were separated from the other scholars, and instructed in the meeting-house with which the school was connected, by a teacher who was affectionate in his manner, constant in his attention, and who was always concerned to get something to instruct and interest his young charge. He possessed no striking talents, but he had a taste for reading; and whatever he met with which he could turn to account for his class, was noted down in a book kept by him for the purpose, and which thus became a storehouse from whence he was always able to draw forth something to illustrate or enforce the subject of his instructions; his success, in attaching to himself the affection of his scholars, was great. Severe affliction, however, caused him to seek surgical assistance in one of the metropolitan hospitals; and when the young people came to the place of instruction, and found their teacher gone, they learned where he was, and proceeded thither with their Bibles: and every Sunday, while he continued there, these youths formed a class round his bed, and received, to the astonishment of the other patients in the ward, the scriptural instruction of their much-loved teacher. An early death prevented his witnessing the more important results of his labors; but those of his fellow-teachers who have survived, have seen the greater part of these youths unite themselves with the people of God, and follow their teacher in various departments of Sunday-school work. Where is the school in which a teacher of equal abilities is not to be found?"

THE SCHOOL.

THE SUPERINTENDENT.

A GOVERNOR is indispensable in every society. A ship's crew require a captain; a bank, a manager; and a Sabbath-school a superintendent. It is impossible to have a good school without an efficient head. It cannot be expected that a number of teachers, accidentally associated, should act in concert without a presiding mind. A school without a superintendent is not a *school*, but a number of separate classes, as isolated as if they met in different apartments; for, though the teachers should agree upon a general plan, there being no one to enforce it, each teacher, in a little while, will take his own way.

It is an awkward remedy, for the want of a superintendent, to make one of the teachers leave his class for a few minutes at the opening and closing of the school. Where the school is *small*, this may be a necessary arrangement; but in all other circumstances it is highly injurious. The common apology for it is, that teachers being scarce, one cannot be spared from his class for the mere purpose of superintending. The apology is insufficient. For, as a small body of troops, well disciplined and generalled, is more efficient than a much larger company acting irregularly; so the promotion of a suitable individual from the ranks of the teachers to the office of superintendent, by giving unity to the school, will at once increase its efficiency. One of the principal causes of the disorganization of many schools, is the absence of superintending care. The classes are not properly arranged; the attendance of the scholars and teachers is not marked; and order is very imperfectly provided for, whenever a school is left without a head. The first step to a

better system must be the choice of a good superintendent. The duties of the superintendent form the subject of the present chapter.

1. On him devolves the whole organization of the school. With the teachers as his privy council, he must take an intelligent survey of the capacities and education of the scholars; the best modes of teaching, arranging, and managing classes; and, to the best of his power, put the whole school in working order. It ought to be his aim to make his a *model school*, superior to every one yet in being, in which all former faults are avoided, and the results of experience are in full operation. A full school-room, and a busy, lively school, should be a great object of ambition with both superintendent and teachers.

Incessant change of plan or purpose is to be guarded against. Novelty has little merit in itself. Alterations should not be made without serious deliberation; and what has been determined upon must have sufficient trial before being abandoned.

2. The superintendent should see that the laws of the school are executed. He must, for this end, scrupulously observe them himself. Instead of setting himself above the laws, he should be an example of obedience, and mark the value of the laws by the respect which he pays to them. Neither teachers nor scholars will long reverence a precept which they see their leader habitually despise. A command comes with a bad grace from the lips of any one who has just been transgressing it himself. Regularity, punctuality, a devout deportment, and a respectful manner to his fellow-teachers, are more necessary to him than to any other individual in the school. Both his faults and his excellencies are more marked.

In executing the laws of the school, one essential quality is *firmness*. It brings the whole government of a school into contempt, when a law which has been deliberately made and announced, and as deliberately violated, is not vindicated

owing to the laxity or imbecility of the superintendent. If a boy, for example, attempts to leave his class and the school without permission, (no unusual occurrence,) contrary to the express regulations of the school, what is the use of a superintendent who does not peremptorily enforce the regulation?

Many excellent and intelligent teachers make indifferent superintendents from want of firmness. When no case is before them, they understand what ought to be done; but in the presence of the offender, their feelings get the better of their judgment, and they pass the offence, as they say, for *this time;* but, as often as the fault is committed, it is again and again pardoned. A superintendent requires to be a good disciplinarian—one who has a high standard of order, and is determined to carry out his views. The most trifling regulation should be enforced, or it should be abolished; for, as there ought to be no law on the code without its use, every law should be implicitly obeyed.

If it be asked, How is this to be done? we reply, that any one who shows that he is not to be trifled with, and who is *consistent* in enforcing every law, will rarely have much difficulty in securing ready obedience. When it is known, or suspected, however, from the thoroughly bad character of a scholar, that he will disobey, the experiment ought not to be openly made: a more private mode of dealing with him must be adopted. One successful rebellion will infect a whole school.

In being firm, avoid noise and blustering. The more quietly an order is issued, consistent with authority, the more effect it will have; it does not ruffle the mind; and its very quietness insures obedience. The lighter a yoke is, the easier it is borne.

Firmness is quite consistent with *kindness.* We recollect admiring the manner in which a superintendent insinuated a rebuke to a teacher. The teacher had neglected to visit a scholar who was sick. The superintendent said to him, "I am sure John and his mother would take a visit from

you so kindly." An officer being about to sit down to dinner, with his colonel, in a sort of undress, remarked carelessly, "I'll dress after dinner." "*Before* dinner, you mean," was the quiet but effectual rebuke.

We doubt the propriety, in Sabbath schools at least, of making the children judges in cases of discipline. The Sabbath hours are too precious to afford time for the necessary deliberation; and we are not sure but that the best way of teaching reverence for the law is to obey it, and enforce obedience.

A superintendent should not interfere directly with the scholars. Mrs. Davids recommends him to say, "I will thank the teachers to keep their classes in order;" "a boy in Mr. A.'s class is behaving badly;" or, "I cannot give out the hymn till the teachers have procured silence:" instead of bawling out in a stentorian voice, "James, I will not have such behavior in the school: be quiet directly." A private hint to the teachers about the conduct of their classes, or a more *general* command, might be equally effective. "When the superintendent gives the order for *silence*, the teachers, instead of saying, 'Be still, Emma,' 'Be quiet, Lucy,' ought *themselves* to be silent. It has more effect."

The *eye* is a powerful instrument of discipline. Few scholars will stand the steady look of a superintendent. It has the great merit of being perfectly noiseless.

3. The superintendent ought to give the general address, if there is one, and conduct the general examination. All the other teachers should, however, be tried in their turn, until those are found who are able to conduct it well. Some, with a little experience, will become efficient; and others, it will be evident, are not qualified for this duty: these latter should not be employed a second time, or at least very rarely. What the superintendent has to consider is, *the good of the school*, not the silly vanity of individual teachers. It is quite easy, by quiet kindness, so to pass by those whom

nature has not intended for public speakers as to give no just ground of complaint.

If the superintendent finds himself surpassed by several of the teachers in the power of interesting the children, he should not keep them in the back-ground, merely because of his being superintendent; rather let him show, on all occasions, that the one thing about which he is interested is the prosperity of the school; and that, as he occasionally requires the teachers to make some sacrifice of feeling, he is equally ready to do so himself.

A stranger should not be asked to address the school, or engage in prayer, unless the superintendent knows something of him, and that he is able to speak to the purpose.

4. The superintendent should keep the general roll-book of the school, or see that it is kept; that the attendance in school is duly registered; and that all the teachers have scholars, and all the scholars teachers. He should receive new scholars, and place them in their classes, listen to complaints, settle disputes, answer inquiries, interest himself in all the details, and, in short, make himself universally useful in the school.

He ought not to take the class of an absent teacher. In any school but a very small one, much disorder will be the inevitable result. But as he will usually have some spare time after attending to his own direct duties, he may profitably employ himself in taking a class from one of the junior teachers, and give him the benefit of his experience in teaching. It is not indispensable to usefulness in this way, that he be superior to the teacher; it is sufficient that the teaching is different.

5. It is a question whether the superintendent ought to be elected annually, or for a longer period, and by whom he is to be chosen. A congregation, in placing their children at Sabbath school, may feel that they ought to have some voice in choosing the superintendent. On the other hand, there is likely to be more harmony in the school,

when the teachers feel that he is not imposed on them, but is their own choice.

An old man, who has not had previous experience, should not be selected, as his mind is not flexible enough to adapt itself to its new situation.

If the election is annual, advantage ought not to be taken of it to displace an efficient superintendent. "The longer a man is accustomed to the helm, the better he will steer." Yet a change of president not unfrequently puts new life into a school, even when the former superintendent was efficient.

We shall say little about the personal character of the superintendent, and his qualifications. These may be gathered with sufficient distinctness from the nature of his duties. There is no stereotyped character for a superintendent, any more than for the governor of any other society; and persons of very different dispositions may succeed equally well. That he must be a good man, is a matter of course. He must not be passionate; for if he cannot rule his own spirit, how shall he rule the spirits of others? He must be conscientious; for having none above him, obedience to law must be spontaneous. But, especially, he must be a *man of method,* whose natural disposition is to reduce chaos into order, and make the different wheels of his machine move in harmony. Let such a superintendent realize the value of his office; and, under a solemn sense of his responsibility, commend himself to God, who will make his grace sufficient for him.

THE TEACHERS.

The office of a Sabbath-school teacher is equally honorable and responsible. It is no light matter to be entrusted with the care of immortal spirits in the first dawn of their existence; to write upon the young minds of children the holy

law of God; to be an angel to their ignorance, and open for them the seals of the book of life; to guide their feet into the way of peace, and teach them, with suitable tenderness, to listen to the words of Jesus,—the sweetest that ever fell on mortal ear,—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is an office worthy of the ambition of the most eminent rank, and the most exalted intellect.

The personal benefits of teaching religion are great: it invigorates the teacher's mind, and greatly enlarges his knowledge. Not only does it oblige him to study, and to make his information accurate, but, in the act of teaching, his knowledge enters into a thousand new combinations, and a fresh stream of thought is poured through his mind. It has also a most salutary influence on the heart. One half of a man's nature is lying torpid so long as he does nothing to benefit his fellow-creatures.

We shall arrange our remarks on teachers under the three following heads:—I. The qualifications of teachers. II. The choice of teachers. III. Recommendations to teachers.

I. The qualifications of teachers. As the qualifications of teachers may be learned from their duties, we do not think it necessary to dwell upon this topic. Whoever knows the way of salvation for himself is, to a certain extent, qualified for imparting a knowledge of it to others. Talent, though invaluable, is not entirely indispensable. Fervent piety will atone for much intellectual deficiency. Many of the most successful teachers have been more indebted to their piety than their talents. If religious instruction consisted in discussing theology, unloosing knotty points of faith, and scrupulously weighing evidences on contested points of doctrine, none but learned men would be eligible as religious teachers. But, as the principal duty of the Bible teacher is to declare the message of God to sinners, and as this message is written in the Scrip-

tures with great simplicity, whoever understands it may become a guide to those who are ignorant.

On the other hand, let us not fall into the too common error, that because children are young and ignorant, every person is qualified to teach them. It is true that the very humblest style of teaching is to be preferred to none; but what a different result should we have had, if all our pious and zealous teachers had been intelligent and apt to teach. It is a very solemn consideration, that the most inexperienced teachers must be set at once to the very highest work—*To save souls.*

A large proportion of Sabbath-school teachers are drawn from the upper ranks of the laboring classes, and the lower ranks of the middle classes. Their education, in consequence, is frequently defective. Many of them have received their sole education in a Sabbath school; and their reading has been snatched at broken intervals, and has, perhaps, been very much confined to religious books. We cannot wonder that ungrammatical expressions, crude notions, and a somewhat bare style of teaching, should occasionally prevail. But the humble efforts of the self-educated teacher are not to be despised. It is to his honor, that in the culpable absence of superior teachers, he, though conscious of his deficiencies, is willing to do what he can. Many of our hard-working artizans and shopmen —many females who ply the busy needle all the week, by their labors put to shame their superiors in station; for if any have a right to the excuse so often heard, that the Sabbath is required as a day of rest, it is such as they who are entitled to it.

The Sabbath school has not obtained from the better educated portion of the Church the same countenance that has been given to the missionary cause. There has been an unacknowledged conviction, that a person who taught amid the squalor of a missionary Sabbath school, was stepping down from his station. The school in this way is de-

prived of much valuable assistance. An educated mind is more *flexible*, and can accommodate itself to a far greater variety of circumstances, than a mind uneducated; and never shall our Sabbath schools attain their true position, until the best educated, the most intelligent, talented, and pious members of the Church are found in the ranks of teachers. The Church has a *right* to their services, and should require them. Do we ask too much in making this claim? We do not ask too much. Unless we can over-estimate the worth of the soul, and the value of the blood of Christ; unless the gospel can be too well understood, and too well taught, we are entitled to demand that the highest talents and the highest piety in the Church shall be engrafted into the Sabbath school.

We do not make this statement to discourage any humble or pious teacher: were every one required to be highly intellectual, to have a vast range of information, a vivid imagination, or a happy facility of expression, how thin would the ranks of the Sabbath-school teachers become! These qualifications, though eminently important, are not the first. Were we required to name one indispensable qualification in a teacher, we should rather say it is to be deeply, thoroughly, prayerfully in earnest. No one can say that this is an impossibility. Light from heaven will stream upon the page of revelation as the earnest teacher reads it; his prayers—the prayers of an agonized spirit over perishing souls—will not always remain unanswered; and the lips that stammer about everything else, will wax eloquent when they speak of the love of Jesus.

II. The choice of teachers. There are two circumstances which render it difficult for us to express a decided opinion upon the choice of teachers—first, the remissness of educated members of the church in becoming teachers; and, secondly, the diffidence of many, whom we believe to be real Christians, in connecting themselves with the church. So that on the one hand we have persons forward in every

good work, who are not communicants; and, on the other, we have persons already connected with the church unwilling to do the duties of members.

We are not prepared to say that no person who is not a member of a church should be admitted as a teacher of a school. There is an evident propriety in all the teachers professing themselves to be disciples of Christ; and it is sufficiently obvious that church-members ought to be foremost in volunteering their services; but if members refuse to teach, and thousands of children require instruction, shall we reject those who *are* willing because they are not members? If a person of good character and attainments is ready to do good, which but for him must be left undone, why should we refuse his aid? Is it not a severe reproach on church-members that they should be outstripped in zeal by those who make less profession? And have not the latter this qualification above the members—their zeal—their love? It must be noticed also, that were membership made a prerequisite to teaching, the test would have no certain value, from the different standards by which qualification for membership is judged.

This much may be granted, that, *if possible*, all the teachers should be members, and that no person should be admitted as a teacher whose character is not unexceptionable, and who, as far as can be judged, is not under the power of the gospel. We dare not sanction the teaching of a merely *moral* man, who will teach a lifeless religion, and inculcate what he does not believe.

The following rules, where they can be applied, may be found useful.

1. A new teacher should be introduced to at least a portion of his fellow-teachers. A teacher of a retiring disposition will sometimes remain isolated from his brethren for many months, and be chilled by the cold looks of strangers, where he had hoped to see none but friends.

2. A probation of one or two months may be assigned to

a candidate before he is formally enrolled among the permanent teachers. The enrolment should take place at a general meeting of the teachers of the school. This will indicate to the new brother the importance attached to his admission.

3. One month's notice should be required of a teacher before leaving the school. This will prevent a hasty resolution to retire from being as hastily acted upon, and will afford time for procuring another teacher.

It might raise the standard of qualifications were candidates examined by competent authorities before admission; but the Church must provide better schools for the education of teachers, before we can expect such an examination to be profitable.

III. We shall now offer some personal recommendations to teachers.

1. Teachers should sedulously cultivate their minds. It is an honorable ambition to become a superior teacher; and we cannot attain great proficiency in teaching, without study and mental cultivation. Poets, it is said, are born, not made; but teachers are made, not born. There may be a few who attain great eminence as teachers without much effort; but the vast majority of good teachers reached their present position after long and laborious exertions. Knowledge must be dug out of the mine—it must be quarried out of the flinty rock. The tree of knowledge has a stately stem. We must climb far to reach even the lowest boughs; and the ripest fruit is always on the highest branches. But whoever takes the requisite pains, will find that he is amply rewarded for his labor. Were other motives wanting, it should be enough for a Christian, that with increased mental cultivation he has increased means of doing good. "An able minister of the New Testament" is a character above all estimation. Let us only recollect that "we are not sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God."

We recommend teachers to keep up their acquaintance with popular religious works—to study a good system of theology, in order to obtain definite views of doctrine—and, above all, to be mighty in the Scriptures. They should not confine their reading to religious works, but should open their minds to general knowledge of all kinds, that they may be thoroughly furnished for their duties. All educational works should be attentively studied till they understand the *principles* of teaching; for a person may be intelligent without being apt to teach. Great benefit will be derived by a teacher from reflecting on his own teaching. A weekly review of his successes and failures, so as to discover their causes, will render him essential service.

2. Teachers should study the characters of children. It is equally necessary to know the constitution of the patient as to be acquainted with the medicine. The sins and temptations of children should be studied; and wherever we see the current strongest, there let us build the strongest bank.

Teachers should also study the peculiarities of the two sexes, for that there is a difference in their mental constitution is undoubted. The difference extends both to the intellect and to the moral nature. Thus, while girls are quicker than boys, boys take a firmer grasp of a subject. We do not say that the one has more talent than the other, but that the talent is of a different kind. Boys have more perseverance than girls, but girls are more patient than boys. Men would sacrifice more for *principle* than women; women would sacrifice more for *affection* than men. A mother's love is proverbial. Their sense of justice and of compassion are in inverse proportions. A man on hearing a tale of oppression indignantly denounces the tyrant; the first thought of the woman is pity for the sufferer. How suitable these feelings are to the provinces of the different parties! Their temptations are different. Few boys care about dress; few girls do not. But how much more pre-

valent are the grosser vices among boys than girls! A difference may be seen in their mode of conducting themselves at school, and in the manner in which they carry on their disputes. Boys are more unruly than girls, but girls are more restless than boys. There is a strange uneasiness sometimes seen in a class of girls, which, from its intangible character, is difficult to repress. A blow comes readier to a boy than to a girl, and a dispute between boys is usually speedily settled by an appeal to arms; girls, on the other hand, without coming to an open rupture, will carry on a series of petty annoyances for a long period. It is easier to convince a man than a woman; but woman is most persuadable. Is it for this reason that they enjoy the happy pre-eminence of being more accessible to the influence of the gospel, and that there are more women than men found in the Church of Christ? We have glanced at these peculiarities merely to show how wide the field of study is, and to put teachers on the track.

3. Teachers should guard against improprieties of manner. A person's manner ought always to be *natural*. Affected liveliness, affected earnestness, or affected solemnity are alike improper; common-place objects do not require any peculiarity of tone, because they happen to be associated with religion. There is no reason why we should speak of Jordan or Jerusalem, David, Joseph, or Samuel, in a peculiar manner, merely because they are mentioned in the Bible. We are to mention them as we should mention any common names, London or Edinburgh, the Thames or the Tweed.

It is an error, however, of a far more injurious character to treat solemn truths with *levity*. Teachers are not without temptation to speak about religious matters in a tone of unconcern. Familiarity is apt to blunt the edge of our sensibilities, and to make even the holy and reverend name of God lose some of its august majesty.

It is difficult to strike the medium, and mingle cheerful-

ness and seriousness in proper proportions. When we are over solemn, we discourage the children. Now religion, though a child of sorrow, and though it is often born with a tear in its eye, is nursed by hope and joy. On the other hand, if our cheerfulness degenerates into levity, the serious employment of the school will be forgotten. Some are to be found who can speak of the transfiguration, the crucifixion, or the resurrection, with the most painful indifference, and who amid the darkness that overshadowed the land, within sight of the Saviour's agonies, and within hearing of his expiring cry, can teach with a levity that is almost profane. Let us guard against the most distant approach to such an error. If you once allow your children to think that you are not in earnest with them—that you are merely going through a lesson, it will be destructive to everything spiritually good.

Our manner, then, ought to be *serious*, but it should be a natural seriousness, which is not put on for the occasion, but which springs up from the deepest emotions of the heart. Yes, with what earnestness ought a saint to teach Christ to a sinner. How apparent should it be, when he is speaking of the evil of sin, that he is not repeating something which he read in a book, but is disclosing the sad experience of his own heart; and how evident, when pointing to the cross of Christ, that he has been there himself.

4. Avoid lecturing. A teacher who is not very watchful, especially if he is at all zealous, is in great danger of falling into a lecturing style of teaching. So deeply does he feel the power of the truth, and so anxious is he for present results, that he cannot stop for the slow process of catechising and illustration; *impression* is all in all with him; exhortation is the beginning, middle, and end of his lessons. What is it to him whether Ahab was king of Israel or Judah, whether Hermon was a hill or a plain, or whether Bethlehem lay north or south of Jerusalem; he has better tidings to communicate than minutiæ like these.

Is it not his mission to gain over his scholars to the cause of Jesus? Influenced by these ideas, he may be seen with a beaming countenance, his eyes lighted up with enthusiasm, and with animated gestures, exhorting and warning his scholars, like one who has a message of life and death. But look at his scholars while he addresses them—if there is an inattentive class in the school, it is his; he has not got the ear of his scholars at all; his warnings are not heard; his exhortations are unheeded, and beyond an impression of their having had something said to them about which the teacher seemed very much in earnest, the children depart as they came.

The natural way of teaching is to address a few observations to the class, catechise them on what they have heard, show them the importance of the subject of the lesson, put a few more questions, give an illustration of the subject, and follow it up by fresh questions; proceed to a new part of the subject, treat it in the same varied style, and never dwelling long on any one thing, intermingle explanations, questions, addresses, and illustrations throughout the whole lesson.

5. A farewell letter should be addressed to a scholar on his leaving school. If there has been a good feeling subsisting between the teacher and his pupil, it will dispose him to receive the letter with gratitude; he will preserve it, and it may long be a witness for the truth amid the temptations of busy scenes. We have heard of letters of this description having been the means of bringing young people to a decision which many years of faithful teaching had been unable to effect.

6. Teachers should be regular in their attendance. Were we to judge from appearances, we should suppose that the Sabbath was the most unhealthy day in the week. Colds and headaches on this day are extremely prevalent. In truth it is surprising and distressing to see what trifles will cause a teacher to absent himself from his hallowed labors;

as if no sacrifice of feeling or convenience were necessary; as if the Sabbath school were to be attended only when he had nothing else to do; the visit of a friend, a sermon, or a trivial ailment, is sufficient to produce his absence. The school is opened, the scholars make their appearance, they look often to the door for their teacher's coming, but there is neither teacher, nor substitute, nor excuse for absence. One child who is indifferent to the truth, is allowed to go other seven days unwarned; another, whose conscience may have been touched, is permitted to relapse into insensibility; and a third, who is hungering for the bread of life, may starve for all that is done by his careless teacher. O for the spirit of the apostle Paul, who "ceased not to warn every one day and night with tears."

7. Teachers should persevere in their labors as long as God gives them means and opportunity. There are too few veteran teachers. "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love," is a charge applicable to a large body of teachers. A change of residence, a petty difference with a brother teacher, a few weeks' sickness or absence from home, or marriage, is sufficient ground with a number of teachers for deserting the Sabbath school. They have not changed their sentiments about the duty or necessity of teaching; they do not even profess to disrelish it, or to be unfitted for it; but, as if caprice or indolence was the keeper of their consciences, they abandon the school at its bidding. Is a deserter from the field of battle branded with eternal infamy? how deep then the shame of the men or the women who cast away their arms in the hottest of the strife, and stand passive when souls are lost or won! How often does Satan, through gaps in the ranks of teachers, break in and steal away souls! The teacher has made a poor exchange. For a time at least, the Sabbath day drags wearily by, he misses his wonted employment. His prayers want their former warmth; how can he say, "Thy kingdom come," when

God has said to him, "Go work in my vineyard," and he refuses to go. He has six or eight fewer to love and to be loved by than he had—he has no class now. A teacher should never resign his class without telling God his reasons. There ought to be a waxing, but no waning in the Christian's zeal; a flow, but no ebb; a spring, a summer, and an autumn, but no winter; a dawn, a morning, and a noon, but neither evening nor night, till the night of death overtake us.

8. Let the teachers abound in prayer. Prayer moistens the root of every grace, gives life and stability to every duty, puts a staff into the hand of every infirmity, and drops balm into every open wound. The teacher may be ever so intelligent and skillful, but if he neglect prayer he will be surpassed in success by that other teacher, the air of whose closet is fragrant with the incense of prayer. The more spiritually minded the teacher is, the more success he will have. The sweeter the tune is, the harsher it sounds when played on an ill-tuned instrument; and we can never teach the gospel well with a heart out of tune. When you strike a harp, if there is another harp in the room, it will vibrate to the same note; and when our hearts are thrilling with the love of God, we may hope to awaken the same emotion in our scholars. If we wish to stamp our name on wood, we do not press the iron letters on it cold, we bring them hot from the furnace; and if our lessons from Scripture are to be imprinted on the minds of our scholars, they must come from hearts glowing with devotion.

MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL.

BUSINESS OF THE SCHOOL.

1. The time of meeting. This will depend on the convenience of teachers and scholars. In England and Ireland it is usual to meet about half-past nine o'clock in the morning, for one hour and a half, afterward take the children to forenoon service, and then meet again for another hour and a half or more at two. Few schools in Scotland meet more than once a day.

2. Duration of meeting. Where reading is not taught, about an hour and a half is enough for one meeting. When children are kept very long, they grow weary and dull; and to associate dullness with religion, is to make the one suggest the other. When the mind becomes fatigued, it will not receive much more instruction. You may put a certain quantity of salt into water, and have it all dissolved, but after a given point, the salt will fall to the bottom; so with a child and instruction. Those go to the other extreme who meet only for one hour. Cases are not rare where the children do not remain together above *three-quarters* of an hour. Such schools are scarcely worthy of the name; the amount of teaching must be very insignificant. Before the devotional exercises and the tasks committed to memory are gone over, it is nearly time for dismissing. We have known instances in which the teacher was stopped by the signal for closing the school while the children were reading their Bible lesson, before one word of instruction from it had been given. We should have no sham schools; let the work be done heartily, and to purpose.

3. Praise. The Sabbath school should be opened and closed with praise and prayer; these should on no account be dispensed with, even in disorderly schools. Children are seldom so serious at any part of the lessons as during

the devotional exercises, when intelligently conducted. The hymn sung should be short, and of such a nature that children can understand it easily. The tunes which children sing may either be lively or plaintive, but they should always be simple, and though serious, not heavy; a child will sing a tune like Old Hundred in a very spiritless manner, compared with the life which he throws into a tune like "The Happy Land." Tunes that are too noisy and rapid are inconsistent with the *sentiment* of praise. Softness and sweetness are indispensable to good singing, though too seldom attended to by children.

Sacred music should receive more attention than has been bestowed upon it. The singing in many of our Sabbath schools and congregations is very inferior, and is little calculated to aid the spirit of devotion. A week-evening class for practicing music should be held during a few months every year. The children will need little solicitation to make them attend, and recent experiments have proved that almost every child is capable of being taught to sing. When the children of a school have once been well trained, it is not difficult to maintain the quality of the singing, as the new scholars will catch the spirit of the rest.

4. Prayer. There are several errors committed in the prayers common in Sabbath schools. They are too long,—we have heard them more than ten minutes in length; they are too *learned*, being couched in technical and theological language; and they have often little connection with the Sabbath school. Prayer is made for the minister and congregation, for the sick, and all who were absent from church, for magistrates, for ministers and missionaries, of every denomination, with a few words at the close about the business of the day; in fact, we have the same "unwritten liturgy" which is in use on all occasions, public or private. We believe that one reason why persons have to complain of wandering minds in prayer, is from being accustomed in childhood to prayers which they could not

understand, and therefore never tried to follow. A habit was thus formed, which it cost years of painful struggle to overcome. The prayers of a Sabbath school should be brief—about *three* minutes long; simple in language, such as all may join in; and they should be strictly confined to the exercises and duties of the day; in short, they should be children's and Sabbath school prayers. If we wish to pray long, let us do it at home. Wherever a teacher wants fluency in prayer, he should carefully ponder over his subjects beforehand.

5. Lessons. When the opening services have been concluded, the first exercise should consist of the repetition of the tasks committed to memory. The children will not give attention to the remarks of the teacher till their memories have been disburdened of their load. These tasks should not occupy very much time, as they are subordinate in importance to the Bible lesson.

The hour for commencing the Bible lesson (which is the next exercise) ought to be the same in all the classes, and may be publicly intimated by the superintendent. The ringing of a small bell is a common signal. This intimation secures a proper regard for the Bible lesson, which, for want of such care, frequently obtains inadequate attention.

All the scholars of one class, if not of the whole school, ought to have the same lesson. It will scarcely be believed that it is still a common thing in some places for a number of children, passing under the name of a class, to be divided into parties of one, two, or three, having each a totally different lesson. They have each a different psalm, a different catechism, a different doctrine to prove, and, it may be, a different Bible lesson to read. A system so contrary to common sense could not exist without great carelessness. It is advantageous to give all the children in the school the same Bible lesson. Various schemes of lessons for schools have been published, which may be used with profit.

6. The last exercise previous to the closing hymn or prayer, is either a general address or an examination of the school, or a combination of the two. The subject is usually taken from the lesson of the day.

An examination, when well conducted, is useful in testing the knowledge of the different classes; but it has rarely interest enough to engage a large body of children at once. We doubt if a general examination, conducted in a formal way, has the ear of many more children at a time, than one of the private teachers has when catechising his own class. When a question is asked and not answered, the pause, from the large number who have been unable to reply, is felt to be a painful one; and when the question is properly met, the answer is not heard distinctly enough to enable the rest to understand it. For these reasons, the interest in a public examination soon flags, unless interspersed with short addresses. Special efforts should be made to render this exercise interesting and profitable.

The address, if arising out of the lessons of the day, is directed to minds prepared for receiving it by previous instruction; and it supplies the chief deficiency in class teaching—its want of *passion;* for class teaching, though invaluable as a means of instruction, and though it gives scope for a large amount of quiet devotional earnestness, does not allow of very animated or stirring appeal.

If addresses are not too frequent, or too long continued; if they are mixed with examination, and possess intrinsic merit, they are very beneficial. We are not prepared to recommend a weekly address in all schools. The form should not be kept up when perhaps not one of the teachers is able to reach the minds of his youthful audience: the benefit of the scholars—not some fanciful scheme of excellence—is to regulate us in all our lessons and arrangements.

7. A missionary society should be connected with every Sabbath school. Nothing expands the heart so much as

doing good, and the habit of contributing when young is excellent training for future usefulness. Some of our home missionary schools collect very liberally. The children should be strictly prohibited from indiscriminate begging for contributions.

8. The Dismission of the Scholars. When the exercises of the day have been concluded, the children should be sent away in a very orderly manner. The classes nearest the door ought to rise first, and walk out leisurely, and those farthest in should not be permitted to rise till the signal is given by the superintendent. It is most unseemly to see the children with their hats in their hands, waiting impatiently for the concluding words of the prayer, and, the moment that the speaker has pronounced the "amen," to behold them rushing tumultuously out of school. There should be strict discipline enforced upon all the scholars, that they may leave the room with the reverence befitting the Sabbath day and a religious school.

The same reverent demeanor should be observed during praise and prayer. The children should be taught to keep their psalm or hymn books open till they have sung the last word of the last line, and to keep their eyes closed and their heads bent for a moment, after the teacher has concluded the prayer. Some congregations and children are quite noted for their neglect of these proprieties. Let us train the rising race to more reverent manners, for reverent manners are no unimportant aid to reverent feelings.*

* It is not always easy to secure perfect order in closing up a large Sunday school. The principal difficulties grow out of the restiveness of the children after an hour and a half session, and also out of the lack of some well-arranged system which the school shall understand and practice. A few Sabbaths since we witnessed, at the John-street Church, in New-York, a method of dismissal with which we were highly pleased. We will briefly describe the plan, so that others who choose may adopt it.

When the closing hymn is announced the school rises. As the singing commences, the female classes, in regular order, pass from their places into the aisle, and walk two by two, teacher and scholar, around the central block of seats. No noise is heard, no confusion appears; the

A bell is useful in a school. It may be rung five minutes before the close of the lessons, and again when the lessons are to be concluded, and for all signals in which the children have a common interest. Such minute arrangements are not to be despised when they tend to the discipline of the school; they are like ruling to paper, which enables us to write straighter.

ROLL-BOOKS.

Every school should be provided with a set of books for recording the names of the scholars and teachers, and the general business of the school.

1. The General Register.—The object of this book is to preserve a history of the school. There should be three divisions in it. (1.) One division for entering the names of the teachers, and the date of their joining the school and leaving it. (2.) A division for entering the names of the scholars in a similar manner. When the teacher or scholar leaves school, there should be an entry made of the reason assigned for leaving. These divisions should be ruled and kept in this manner:—

Admitted.	Name and Address.	Age	Class.	Left.	Remarks.
1843. Jan. 1.	Hay, James, 3 Forth st.	9.	3.	1849. May 10.	Gone to Perth.

(3.) A division for making an annual minute of the year's proceedings. This should contain the date at which the school was first opened, and the number of teachers and

procession sings as it walks, and soon all are regularly formed for a quiet march up into the church. In due order the male classes join the procession, which, when the aisle is filled, passes quietly out of the room. The length of the hymn may be graduated, so as to close when the last children go out.

All know the interest and solemnity of the parting scene at camp-meetings, and in this mode of dismissing a Sabbath school we have something very much like it, if not in some respects superior.—*Sunday School Advocate.*

scholars when it was commenced; the names of the books that have been used in the classes from time to time; the number of library volumes lent out during the year; the number of teachers and scholars who have attended school during the year; the number of those who have joined or left it; and the names of those who have died. How interesting would such a record prove at the end of a few years!

2. Minute-Book.—This book is for the purpose of keeping a weekly account of the general attendance of teachers and scholars.

By means of this register, the number of classes in the school can be ascertained at once—the attendance of teachers—the number of scholars on the roll, and their attendance—and the number of those who have been admitted and who have left during the month. The whole of the entries will not occupy above two or three minutes, unless the school is very large. There are various modifications of this plan, which it is unnecessary to notice here.

3. The Teacher's Class-Book.—Every teacher should mark the attendance of his own scholars. We prefer this method to its being done by the superintendent, as it makes the teachers feel their responsibility. We lay no stress, however, upon the particular mode of keeping the roll-books of the school, if they are well kept.

The following minute directions should be attended to:—1. The teacher's name, with the number of his class, ought to be entered in the beginning of the class-book. 2. The full name of the scholars ought to be entered. 3. The entry should be in *ink*, not in pencil. 4. The attendance should be marked while in the school; without accuracy and regularity a class-book is useless. 5. When a scholar is absent, the cause of absence ought to be filled in, opposite his name. 6. On a scholar leaving school, the cause of his leaving should be marked, and the place to which he is gone. Lastly. The class-book ought to be kept *neatly*; whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. By carrying

out these rules, the class-books will form a history of the class, as the general register is a history of the school.

Though the books we have mentioned are a necessary part of the furniture of a school, many superintendents have not procured them. Many could not inform us when their schools commenced, and what has been their history. Some do not preserve even one year's transactions, and could not tell us, without considerable trouble, the number of the classes, the names of the teachers, or the average attendance. We have known whole towns where the Sabbath school statistics had to be guessed at, or where they could not be taken at all, from want of an account being kept. No school will ever be in a very efficient state where there is not a well-kept set of books.

ARRANGEMENT AND CLASSIFICATION.

A DUE arrangement and classification of the scholars, is of great importance to the proper management of the school.

1. The seats. The seats should be made very short, and when the room has to be used for lectures and other church purposes, the back of every other seat should be made movable, in the style of rail-road seats, so that members of the same class may sit facing each other and the teacher, who sits between the rows at one end while reciting. The teacher's seat may be made like a little box, capable of holding the books or Bibles of the class. There should be a shelf below the seats for the children's bonnets. Seats ought all to have backs, otherwise the children in a little while become restless and weary.

We strongly recommend this mode of arranging the classes wherever it is practicable. It is the only arrangement by which the teacher can have the entire command of his class. Instead of requiring to travel backwards and forwards from one end of his class to the other, as when the children are seated in a line, (a very bad disposition of

them,) he never needs to change his position; and instead of having the attention of only one or two scholars at once, he is equally well seen and heard by the whole.

2. Children of both sexes should meet together in the same school. We have not seen any evil resulting from the boys and girls meeting together. We do not know how such a Mohammedan custom as the separation of the sexes should have been introduced. We have seen boys and girls, even in the same class, assorting very well, and acting as a mutual stimulus to each other.

Indeed, a school of boys only, or girls only, is incomplete. A superintendent who has only girls to address, is apt to become sentimental; if he has boys alone, he may become too stern. Certain parts of discipline cannot be so well carried out by a female teacher as by a male; and we have the authority of those who have seen much of both systems for saying, that the teaching of a girl's school is in great danger of becoming tame. We do not object either to male or female teachers for either boys or girls; matters of this kind usually arrrnge themselves.

3. The scholars should be classified according to their age and education. *Age* alone is not a sufficient ground of classification, for talents and education make a wide difference between children of the same age; nor is *education* alone a sufficient standard; for a child of twelve who has been neglected, will not patiently take a place beside a child of six or seven, who has been well instructed. Both elements should be taken into consideration in classifying the scholars.

In order to carry out a proper system of classification, the superintendent must have absolute power to place a new scholar wherever he thinks proper. The scholars should not be allowed to bring a younger brother or sister, or a companion, into the same class with them: nor should strangers be permitted to attach themselves to any teacher for whom they take a fancy.

It is also necessary to classification that the superintendent shall have such an acquaintance with the standing of each class, as may enable him to determine at once where to place the new scholar. It may be well, however, at the end of a month's probation, to inquire if he suits his classmates, so that if he has been placed in too high or too low a class, the error may be rectified.

A new scholar should be received with great kindness both by superintendent and teacher. It may be his first entrance into a school; he may have straggled in by chance from the midst of wicked companions; he may have had a careless teacher in the school he has left, and may be taught by his reception that in his new school every one is sincere and earnest; or he may have had a very pious teacher whom he was forced to leave, and may behold the same love in the new teacher to whom he is introduced; but whatever be his circumstances, his entrance may be the turning-point of his life, and he should be welcomed to the school with the greatest cordiality. On the introduction of a new scholar, no matter what is the subject of the lesson, his teacher should set the way of salvation through Christ explicitly before him, that if he should never return, he may have heard for once in his life "the faithful saying, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

The proper classification of the scholars is a matter of primary importance. A perfect classification is indeed impossible, but an approximation may be made sufficient for all practical purposes; yet few parts of the arrangement of a school are less attended to. We have seen one class contain children ranging from the age of five to fifteen;—their acquirements being as diversified as their ages; the youngest could not read the alphabet, and the oldest was very intelligent. Nor is this a solitary case. A large number of teachers have two or three classes under the name of one, and are obliged to teach the classes as much apart as if they sat on different seats; anything better fitted

to insure failure cannot be imagined. The existence of Infant Classes and Senior Classes aids much in the right classification of a school.

It is desirable to have a periodical revision of the classes, that those children who have outstripped their fellows, or who may have fallen behind them, may be placed among classmates more equally matched.

Yet we object very decidedly to the plan of removing children from class to class as they advance. When a scholar is found in advance of his teacher he should be removed at once to a higher class; but if he is competent for his duties, we think that the longer he is under the same teacher the better. A most important part of the education of the children is the affection excited for their teachers, and this should not be trifled with, as it is when a yearly change is made. When the children are somewhat advanced, one removal, especially of girls, from a female teacher to a male teacher, is highly proper; but more, in ordinary cases, we do not recommend. It is a most interesting sight to witness a class, who entered as ignorant little boys or girls, gradually advancing, under their teacher's care, till they become the senior class of the school. How closely must the better portion of them have attached themselves to their teacher, and how many sacred recollections must they have of his earnest instructions.

It will be found occasionally, that a teacher and a scholar, though good-natured enough when apart, do not agree when placed together. It is not easy to say where the blame lies in such cases; the two seem like charcoal and saltpetre—very innocent in themselves, but very explosive in combination. These cases may be noticed and the scholar removed.

A knot of dull children should not be allowed to sit together in a class, but be intermixed with those whose minds are sharper. Unruly children should be placed where they may be most directly under the teacher's eye.

The younger classes should be ranged near the superintendent's desk, so that they may be under his command.

4. *The size* of the classes is to be regulated by the ability of the teacher, and the age or dispositions of the scholars. An infant and a senior class may be pretty numerous, and, where there is good order and accommodation, the number may be greater than with ill-trained children, and defective accommodation. From six to ten scholars, in ordinary cases, are enough.

No teacher should have more scholars than he can thoroughly manage, and every teacher should have his hands quite full. If a teacher cannot teach and keep in order ten scholars, let him try eight, or six, or four: but it is a great waste of power to commit only four or six children to the care of a teacher who can as easily manage a dozen. The present staff of teachers, we are persuaded, could instruct a great many more than they now teach, were care taken to fill up vacancies as they occur, and rather to run two classes into one, and seek scholars for a new class, than allow two teachers to trifle their time with three or four spiritless scholars each.

The principal objection to a large class (apart from the difficulty of teaching it) is, that the teacher cannot easily find time to interest himself about the members of it individually. Now a class should never be so large as to prevent his visiting all absentees, looking after the sick, and acquiring a personal acquaintance with each individual.

5. The size of the school can only be determined by circumstances. Where a sufficient number of children can be got, we should prefer a school of one or two hundred to the same number in different schools. Classification can be better carried out; there is more life in such a school; the sympathy of numbers is greater; and a good superintendent influences a wider sphere; the children themselves

prefer a large school, and the funds will generally be in a better condition, from the school occupying a larger space in the public eye.

ORDER.

Order is said to be Heaven's first law; it is among the last recognized in some Sabbath schools. Very few teachers seem aware of its importance; yet to teach amid tumult, or inattention, is to sow seed in a whirlwind. Among the more unruly children, the height to which disorder rises, occasionally, almost passes belief. We do not say that the blame lies entirely with the teacher, for bad children have such a resolute spirit of evil in them, and are so ingeniously mischievous, that they will occasionally baffle the most experienced teacher; they often take intermittent fits of wickedness, and for a week or two are nearly ungovernable; there is then an interval of comparative quiet, till the mischief having accumulated a second time, it breaks out, and there is another season of anarchy. They who are thus tried need great patience and prayer. We have known some scholars, at a given signal, overturn the seat on which they were placed, and send several children rolling on the floor; we have known others who agreed to imitate different trades; one boy would hammer like a smith, another draw up his arm as if he were sewing like a tailor, and another imitate a shoemaker. Putting out the gas is a favorite trick in some schools; and a school has been known to rise *en masse*, and form a ring round two boys who were fighting.* A teacher, therefore, who has such wild scholars must not be hastily blamed if the reins should sometimes slip from his hands.

But in schools far removed in character from the specimens above noticed there is a great amount of disorder, for

* We are glad to say, that during many years of Sabbath school experience, we have never known of such things in this country. Ed.

which teachers cannot be so easily excused. We have wondered sometimes where a teacher puts his eyes and ears when he comes to school. His children may be talking together, but he does not hear it; they may be reading, or looking with lack-lustre eye to the ceiling, but he does not see it. Out of ten scholars he has perhaps only one auditor; yet he is quite satisfied, as if he "fit audience finds, though few;" and of all that the rest are doing he is singularly oblivious. One boy falls asleep, and enjoys his repose for several minutes without interruption: and another leaves the class altogether for a time, and on his return is received as if the teacher was unaware of his having been absent. Even in quiet and well-ordered schools, attention is the exception. Very few teachers have the attention of above the *fourth* of their scholars at a time, or seem to take any means to secure it. A great deal of the best teaching is wasted through this neglect. The children are taught only when addressed individually, instead of having the benefit of an hour or an hour and a half's instruction. A certain amount of heedlessness may be calculated on, but it may be very much lessened by proper care.

Order is not something which requires to be superinduced upon a school; it should be the natural result of the arrangements for instruction. If all the teachers and scholars came at the appointed hour, and the lessons and exercises were made sufficiently interesting, order would follow as a matter of course. But since neither teachers nor scholars fulfill their duty entirely, other means to secure order must be resorted to.

1. Punctuality on the part of superintendent, teachers, and scholars, is the first point of order. Be punctual yourselves, and enforce punctuality on your scholars. If a teacher takes five minutes to himself, the scholars will take ten. If nine o'clock or three o'clock is the time appointed for opening the school, let it be opened as the clock strikes the hour. The same punctuality must be observed in closing.

The children will become very restless whenever the school hour is exceeded. Punctuality, as its name implies, is a very small matter; but it is not for that reason unimportant. It is like the linch-pin of a wheel—very small, but indispensable.

2. Supposing the classes comfortably seated and well assorted, (two preliminaries all but indispensable,) keep your eye on the class during the whole time of meeting, and check the very first appearance of misbehavior. The scholars should be made to feel that they are under the most vigilant care, and that they cannot look down to their books, or smile to a companion, or give a pinch with their fingers, which their teacher does not mark. This feeling will be more influential in preventing improprieties than a world of admonitions; indeed, constant fault-finding is very injurious.

3. Have no unexecuted threats. How common is a scene like the following:—A teacher addresses a boy who is misbehaving.—"Sit still, John; if you do that again I will put you out." In a few minutes the offense is repeated. "Are you really doing that again? I told you I would put you out." The boy, however, is allowed to keep his place. Again he renews his offense. The teacher pauses, looks steadily at his refractory scholar for a minute or two, and, holding up his hand in mingled astonishment and vexation, exclaims, "Is it really possible, after I have spoken so plainly? I *will* execute my threat!" Yet all the while the boy knows that he is quite safe from expulsion. Now never give a child occasion to doubt your word; never promise what you do not perform; it is not honest, and it teaches your scholars to despise you. If they have trifled with your authority once, make them feel it shall be the last time.

But we should not be rash in our threats. Expulsion ought to be a last resort, since the worse a person is, he has the more need to be at a Sabbath school. It may not be amiss to remind teachers not to make threats they are

unable to execute. We have known a teacher say, "I will put you out;" and when he attempted it, *fail*.

4. It is very improper to attempt to put down disorder by threatening the offenders with everlasting punishment. It only brings that awful doctrine into contempt. The children at such a time hear in it only the voice of an irritated teacher.

5. The teachers should be very firm and decided with their scholars, and teach them from the first which is to be master. "My boy," said a teacher to an unruly scholar who had recently joined his class, "if you come hither to be taught, I will teach you; but if you are come to be master, you are come to a wrong place." Too much has been said about the influence of love over disorderly children. No doubt its influence is very great; no teacher will succeed without it; his love must be a love which many waters cannot quench nor the floods drown. But love may be overrated. Few who have the charge of hardy, stirring boys, or quickwitted, mischievous girls, will say that nothing but love is required to govern them. We must be *firm* as well as loving, and, if need be, *stern*. The conscience of an ill-disposed child will teach him that this firmness is just; and therein lies its power. A teacher is the *master* of his class, not their equal; and though he may be full of love for them, and manifest his love on all suitable occasions, he should show that he has authority over his scholars—that he does not entreat or beseech, but commands them, and that whatever he says must be done. We are no advocate for a harsh, unsympathizing government; nothing can be more foreign to the sacred character of the Sabbath school. We would only qualify the indiscriminate praise that has been heaped upon love, and remind teachers that *firmness* and *decision* are equally necessary to discipline.

6. One of the most effectual means of preserving good order, and dealing with a refractory pupil, is to visit him at home, and, while he is removed from the temptations of

the school, to speak very plainly but very kindly of his evil conduct. Many have been won by such means who seemed utterly irreclaimable.

7. Lastly, the best way to preserve order is *to teach well.* It is for want of sufficient interest in the lesson that children have attention to spare for other things. Let us give them occupation, and make our instructions more attractive than anything else they see, and we shall have a quiet school.

It is in commencing a school that the teacher has the greatest difficulty in procuring order. When it is once established, it is easy to preserve it. A child in a good school, has not merely the rule of the superintendent or the command of his teacher to resist when he is disobedient—he has the whole habits and sympathies of the school against him; and is kept in his right place by a pressure as gentle and insensible, but as real, as the pressure of the air. He comes in and goes away without noise, rises or sits down at the word of the teacher, preserves a devout attitude in prayer, and an orderly appearance at his lessons, because all others around him do the same. To the establishment of thorough order and discipline, therefore, as indispensable requisites to the proper working of all the other parts of a school, one of the first efforts of superintendents and teachers should be directed.

REWARDS.

The custom of bestowing annual prizes on the best Sabbath scholars is falling into deserved disrepute. There is at least an appearance of propriety in giving prizes to those who excel in reading, writing, or arithmetic, in a week-day school, for to learn these branches the children are sent to school, and the most proficient may be supposed to be the most diligent; but in a Sabbath school, the best scholar is not he who has the best memory, or the quickest intellect, or who has been most diligent and regular; but, if we judge him by the end for which a Sabbath school is instituted,

the best scholar is he who is the humblest, most prayerful, obedient, and holy. Now, as prizes cannot be given for these Christian graces, to bestow a prize upon mere proficiency, is to *un*say, by the reward, what we have been saying through the whole year's lessons, and to teach in the most practical manner, that the scholar whom we place highest is not the best Christian, but the best learner.

If, however, a modified system of rewards can be devised, which will encourage attendance and proficiency without exciting the envy of other children, or obscuring the main design of religious instruction, it is not to be hastily rejected because it bears the name of a reward. In schools where reading is taught, the necessity of a stimulus to regular attendance is not much felt, as both parents and children soon learn to appreciate the advantage of being able to read; but in schools which confine themselves to religious instruction, there is always a considerable proportion who will be induced by a very slight temptation to absent themselves. In all schools, also, there is a certain number whom it is very difficult to induce to commit a lesson to memory, even though the lesson be made ever so short or easy. We think the following plan, which is in operation in several schools, might be useful in such cases.

The plan is, 1st. To bestow a ticket for *attendance*, the ticket being withheld if the scholar comes too late to school. 2d. To bestow another ticket for *accurate* repetition of tasks. 3d. These tickets are returned monthly or quarterly to the teacher, who takes a note of their number. 4th. A certain number, say fifty or a hundred, entitles the scholar to a book, in value say sixpence or a shilling. If a scholar chooses, he may defer applying for his book until he has gathered double or treble the number of tickets, when he receives a book of corresponding value.

The benefits of this plan are, 1st. It makes the attendance of the children more regular, and encourages them to greater diligence. 2d. The stimulus which it supplies

is not confined to the quickest scholar, but takes effect upon the whole class; so that a slow child may, by diligence, have as many tickets as his more talented neighbors. 3d. The stimulus operates at all times, instead of for a few weeks merely before the distribution of the prizes. 4th. There is no room for envy, for the child forfeits his ticket, not because others are better than he, but because of his own carelessness. 5th. It does not interfere with the religious character of the school. A prize won by competition may teach a child to overvalue mere learning; but a gift or testimonial for diligence and attention merely teaches him their true value.

The plan noticed above, or any similar plan, will not succeed unless all its provisions are rigidly enforced. If late attendance, or a lesson imperfectly committed, obtain a ticket, contrary to express rules, the sooner the plan is abandoned the better.

We are, however, far from thinking that the bestowal of rewards according to this modified system is indispensable, or even in all cases advantageous; it is rather to be permitted than recommended; very good teachers will not require it; it is in danger of being abused, and entails a heavy expense upon the school.

PUNISHMENTS.

As no law can be enforced without a penalty for disobedience, even the laws of the Sabbath school, simple as they are, require to be protected by suitable sanctions; happily, it is not requisite that these shall be either numerous or severe. Reproof for lesser offenses, and expulsion for more serious offenses, are all that are needed to maintain authority in a Sabbath school.

1. Reproof. The more watchful a teacher is, and the more interest he takes in his scholars, he will have the less occasion to reprove them; but in the most favorable cir-

cumstances, the inconstancy and perversity of childhood will betray it into error. Smiles and signals interchanged, whispering, petty acts of annoyance, and even occasional outbreaks, are common enough, and require the corrective hand of the teacher. We refer our readers to what we have said on preserving order in school, for some suggestions on the subject; we add here one or two observations on reproving children.

(1.) Let the reproof be proportioned to the offense. Distinguish between heedlessness and wickedness; never give factitious importance to trifling faults by saying too much about them. A speck falling on a sheet of white paper may be blown away by a breath, and leave no stain; brush it off roughly, and it will be engrained into the paper.

(2.) Never charge a child a second time with faults which have been pardoned or punished; it is unjust, and will steel him against the most deserved rebukes.

(3.) Never reprove in anger. The most rigid restraint should be placed upon the natural feelings of anger or impatience at the children's dullness and perversity; indeed, we should never reprove them on account of natural dullness, or of ignorance that was unavoidable. We must occupy a high position before the scholars, and show them that we are deeply in earnest; so that we may conquer their ignorance by diligence, their waywardness by patience, and their indifference by love.

(4.) Appeals to the superintendent should be rare, and only when the teacher, after long trial, has found himself unable to cope with his scholar's refractory temper. The more rarely a public rebuke is administered, the more it will be dreaded.

When a public reproof is thought to be necessary, it should be administered with all solemnity. The nature of the offense should be briefly stated, in order to secure the approbation of the children to the rebuke; for if the culprit imagines that he has the sympathy of his school-

fellows with him, he will brave almost every punishment; but the most obdurate will give way if he stand alone.

2. Expulsion. This is the highest punishment allowable in a Sabbath school, and should not be inflicted except in extreme cases. We believe that expulsion is too frequently resorted to. The teacher is apt to consult his present comfort in ridding himself of a troublesome scholar, more than the interests of the scholar or the school.

(1.) Expulsion should not be resorted to, except in cases of determined insubordination, and till everything has been tried to reclaim the culprit. The class of offenses for which it is made the penalty, will depend upon the class of children of which the school is composed. If the children are well educated, or well behaved, such an offense as swearing, or improper language, when repeated and persevered in, may perhaps constitute a sufficient reason for expulsion; but if the school is a missionary school, where the greater portion of the children are in the habit of hearing or using bad language, as the evil done is less, the penalty must be less.

(2.) Expulsion should be a *public* act, and should not be left to the caprice of individual teachers. There is nothing more offensive than to have a school disturbed, first by the angry tones of an irritated teacher, and then by his dragging by the collar a boy, whose face is distorted with passion, while he is thrust into the street, and the door shut against him. Perhaps three public reproofs should be administered before expulsion is resorted to, with a warning at the last reproof, that expulsion would be the penalty for the next offense. If the intervals between the offenses were very wide, we should allow one or two more trials. When expulsion is finally necessary, the criminal should be again publicly rebuked, and be told to leave the school. It will be appropriate to the character of the school that the offender shall be remembered in prayer.

Exclusion for non-attendance is another mode of punish-

ment. We think that a scholar should not be cut off though he has been absent for two or three Sabbaths without a sufficient reason, until all proper means have been tried, and found ineffectual, to secure his attendance. Such summary exclusion will be a bribe to an indolent teacher, and an injury to the scholar; it will effect nothing as an example; and we must not forget that the school is, like the gospel, for the evil rather than for the good.

Personal chastisement is a third mode of punishment sometimes to be found in our Sabbath schools. For this we are no advocate, simply because it is unnecessary. In families, we believe that corporal punishment is frequently demanded, and we might say indispensable. That it is sometimes inflicted with cruelty, and in anger, is true, and inexcusable; but the remedy lies not in abandoning it, but in administering it with moderation. Most of the substitutes that have been proposed, are for parents in genteel circumstances, who have rooms to confine the culprits in, and time to bestow in dealing with them. But what are those to do who have but one room, who are toiling all the day, and who have no leisure for lengthened admonition? And how shall they withhold a meal from their rebellious child, whose daily meals are scanty enough already? Nothing but personal castigation can avail in such circumstances.

In Sabbath schools, however, the same necessity does not exist. The teachers are there for the exclusive purpose of watching and educating their scholars; they have small classes which it is possible to keep in good order; the fact that they are teaching religion makes a reproof come with double power; and if the teacher's personal influence is insufficient, a public rebuke, in presence of the whole school, is what few are hardy enough to encounter a second time. Indeed, in schools where the children are very rough and untutored, blows are the worst of all ways of influencing them, as they are so used to them at home; and, though you may beat a child into silence, you will never beat him into

attention. We would strongly advise our friends who have used the rod, to leave it at home for the future, and never strike any of their scholars. We do not remember of having once seen a blow given in a Sabbath school in a right spirit.

Some teachers recommend as a substitute for the rod, a pretty rough shake by the collar or shoulder. It has the effect of paralyzing the spirit of mischief, without exasperating the scholar.

THE LIBRARY.

A WELL selected library is an indispensable appendage to the Sabbath school, and good books are now so abundant, and so cheap, as to render the neglect of the library inexcusable. It attracts and attaches children to the school, cultivates their minds, fosters a taste for knowledge, prepares them for a higher kind of instruction, and powerfully seconds the lessons of the Sabbath.

Though libraries are increasing in number, not a few schools are still without them, especially schools in thinly peopled districts of the country, and local and home mission schools. Want of funds, rather than indisposition on the part of teachers, may account for the omission, but perhaps a little more exertion would obtain a sufficient sum with which to commence a library, and a very small yearly collection would keep up a supply of new works.

Comparatively few libraries are well selected. Teachers are apt to trust too implicitly to catalogues and attractive names, or they consult their own matured taste rather than the wants of the children. We have seen Chesterfield's Letters, and Edwards on the Freedom of the Will, in a Sabbath-school library, where all the children were young. Now, until we have exhausted the most suitable books, we should introduce none of a different order. On the choice of books for a Sabbath-school library, we make the following remarks:—

1. Religious biographical works should occupy a con-

siderable place in the library. They convey instruction in a very pleasing way. The Dairyman's Daughter is a good specimen of this class of writings.

2. Historical works.—There are only a few *religious* histories which are suitable for the young. A history of the Church, in a style of well-selected and lively narratives, would be a most valuable acquisition to religious literature. Instead of detailing the strifes of councils, and the internal dissensions of the church, we should have a history that would exhibit the encounters of the church with the world, and describe the noble stand which good men have in all ages made for the Gospel. A condensed history like Barth's General History, cannot be perused continuously. It may be useful to adults and as a book of reference, but is not suitable for children.

3. Missionary works.—Writers for the young have rarely been so happy as in missionary works. We have read few which are not both instructive and interesting.

4. Miscellaneous works.—Our language is rich in doctrinal, experimental, and practical works, that are very well suited to the Sabbath-school library. The First Day of the Week, Old Humphrey's writings, and Reminiscences of the West Indies, are good specimens. The older writers, even though the matter is excellent, do not suit the young very well, because of their antiquated style. There are some exceptions, but, in general, books of this description should be modern.

None of the books in the library should be large. We may except such a work as Williams' Missionary Enterprises. Children will not read through a bulky volume, or, if they do, it is with little interest.

When children are very young, the books given to them should contain only a few leaves.* By commencing with small works, they learn the habit of reading a book quite through.

* As in our Children's Library, series A and B for example.

5. The books should all bear a religious character. Books of mere science, and of general history; lives of such men as Franklin, or Francis Horner; and works of general literature, are not suitable for a Sabbath-school library. It may be remarked that a judicious author, having the proper end in view, may adapt a great variety of subjects to religious and Sabbath-school purposes. It is in this way that the Sabbath school is fast creating a literature for itself.

6. It has been proposed by several writers, that the librarian should select the books for the children, and give to each what he thinks most suitable. The extent to which this principle can be carried is very limited The greater part of the scholars have nothing peculiar in their circumstances; the same book will, perhaps, suit nineteen out of twenty scholars equally well. The librarian cannot have sufficient acquaintance with the children of a large school to know what to give them; and as from twenty to fifty volumes are read yearly by every scholar, the supply becomes exhausted. The teacher of each class may, however, be useful in pointing out suitable books for his scholars. Wherever there is a peculiarity in the situation or religious condition of any of his scholars, this should be especially attended to.

A great difference should be made in the class of books which are read by children of six, and children of twelve. It is most injurious to put a solid work of divinity into the hands of a little child, and thus make him believe that religious literature is unintelligible. It is equally improper to keep intelligent children at the books they read when five years younger.

7. Unless the librarian is very strict in enforcing the regular return of the books, they will soon be lost. We have known fifty volumes lost in a school in one year, in consequence of lax book-keeping. When a scholar has lost a volume, he should be called upon to pay a part of the price of a new one. A small fine should be inflicted for injuring

the book, or the child may be denied the use of the library for a week or two.

8. Some schools make a charge of a halfpenny, or a penny, monthly, for the use of the library. Others make it dependent on the conduct of the scholars; while others make it free to all. Circumstances must determine which of the two last-named plans should be adopted.

9. Every library should contain a supply of good books for teachers. Among the books should be the following:—

(1.) One or two good commentaries, such as Clarke's or Benson's, to which the teachers shall have access.

(2.) A Bible Dictionary: Watson's Biblical and Theological Dictionary is a standard and invaluable work; Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature is more modern, and for general purposes is perhaps the best extant.

(3.) Works relating to the history of the Bible, its interpretation, the manners and customs of the Jews, the geography of Palestine and the East, and all books that will enable the teacher to extend his knowledge of the Bible generally.

(4.) Works on Sabbath schools and teaching. The following are the best with which we are acquainted:—

The Sunday School Teacher's Guide, No. 1 of our Adult Library, is a compilation of the very best productions on this subject from different authors, best adapted to general use.

The Teacher Taught, by Packard. This is also an American work. It is not so lively as the work of Todd, but it is not inferior in merit. It keeps closer to its title, and is eminently sensible and practical.

The Sunday School, an Essay, by Louisa David. The hopeful, onward spirit of this lady's writings is contagious. Her Essay abounds in useful practical directions for the government of schools. This work is largely quoted in our Sabbath-school series of Tracts.

The Works of Jacob Abbott. As an intellectual and moral teacher, Abbott ranks very high. From an attentive

study of his works for the young, we may derive great advantages. His principles of teaching are excellent, and most happily illustrated.

Home Education, by Isaac Taylor. This admirable work is written in a spirit of the most genial philosophy. Its object is to trace the development of the faculties, and to show how instruction should be adapted to them, as they are progressively unfolded. A work of the same nature on religious education would be invaluable.

VISITING.

One of the greatest auxiliaries to the instructions of the Sabbath school is a well-sustained system of home visitation. A teacher never takes his right place in a child's affections until he has had personal intercourse with him out of school. Until then, the only connection between the teacher and his class is a link which is renewed and snapped once a week, and which is available for no other purposes than the communication of instruction. A teacher cannot feel the same interest in a child whom he knows only for an hour on Sabbath, as in one whose joys and sorrows he has shared—whom he has aided by his counsel or cheered by his sympathy; and the child must receive the school instructions in a very different spirit from a person whom he knows only as a teacher, than from one who is his friend as well as his teacher, and to whom he can come frankly in every emergency. If the amount of knowledge possessed by a child be of less importance than the spirit in which he embraces instruction, assuredly visitation ought to occupy a high place in every Sabbath-school teacher's estimation, for nothing gives such weight to instruction as friendly home intercourse between teacher and scholar. The best feelings of the child's nature are awakened by it.

1. The first class of scholars requiring visitation is *the absentees*. These are usually pretty numerous. Even in the

best schools we may calculate on a considerable weekly deficiency. Where the children are drawn from the more destitute classes, the per centage will necessarily be higher; and where visitation is neglected, the absentees will soon outnumber those who attend. Indeed, nothing will secure a regular attendance on school so effectually as painstaking and persevering visitation. Tickets and rewards will have a certain influence, and may be employed sparingly; but they will be greatly aided by the visits of the teachers. Tickets and rewards usually fall into the hands of those who are disposed to be regular at any rate, but visitation reaches the worst members of the class. A full class is an almost infallible sign of a teacher who is conscientious in his visitations. We never saw a school thrive where visitation was neglected. We have known large schools emptied in the course of a few months through the carelessness of the teachers, though the children were drawn chiefly from the congregation with which they were connected, and where, consequently, there was every advantage; and, on the other hand, schools opened under the most discouraging circumstances, where the children had received the worst education, and were exposed to the greatest temptations, have flourished through many years, by dint of good teaching in the school and great faithfulness in visiting.

The usual excuse for neglect of visitation is want of time. A press of business, and the distance of the scholars from the abode of the teacher, render it impossible, it is said, to look after the absentees. In the majority of cases this plea cannot be allowed. It is a very suspicious circumstance that it is an excuse which takes almost the very same shape by whomsoever it is made. Whether the teacher be male or female, in business, or a lady whose time is very much at her own disposal; and whether the town be small or large—there is the same engrossing occupation with business, and the same impassable distance to the residence of the scholars.

The time required to visit absentees is very much less than those who neglect visiting imagine; for one of the first effects of visitation is greatly to reduce the number of irregular attenders. The following is an extract from the roll-books of three teachers whose classes were drawn from a locality unfavorable to regular attendance:—

No. in Class.		DEC.			JAN.				FEB.				MAR.			
		14	21	28	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22
11	Absent	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	3	0	4	5	1	0	0	0
14	"	1	1	1	4	2	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
8	"	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

We believe that few teachers who are very much in earnest will find any insuperable difficulties in the way of visitation. It is not necessary to spend more time in the call than to ask the reason of the scholar's absence.

In some schools visitors are appointed, whose special duty it is to visit absentees. There may be circumstances which render such visitors necessary; and in all cases it is better that the children be visited by a regular agent, than that they shall not be attended to at all. But the benefits of visitation will be very imperfectly realized wherever the teacher does not become responsible for his own absentees. We would lay it down as a settled rule of every school, not to be departed from but in extreme cases, that every teacher shall be able to give an account by the following Sabbath of his absent scholars. We should hesitate to receive a teacher, whatever his merits might be, who refused to comply with this rule. The best interests of the school rest upon it, and for no slight reason should it be put aside. It may be noticed, that a new scholar should be visited as as soon as possible after his admission.

2. The sick are another class requiring visitation. It is not necessary for us to attempt to determine how far a

teacher is justified in exposing himself to the risk of infection in visiting the sick; every case must be settled on its own merits; but wherever a visit can be profitably made without undue risk, it should not be neglected. Sickness takes away the false glare of life, gives a subduedness of tone to the mind, seconds the voice of conviction, and brings the realities of death and eternity home to the heart. "The blessed beams of heavenly truth," in such a time, have often shone

> "With such a hallowed vividness and power,
> As ne'er were granted to a happier hour."

The teacher robs himself of one of his highest privileges who neglects to visit his sick scholars. To see the dim eye light up with pleasure as the teacher takes the child's burning hand in his own; to win a smile to that wan cheek as we cheer him with a few words of comfort; to speak in the hushed accents befitting a sick chamber, of the love of the Saviour; and breathe a brief, earnest prayer with, it may be, the dying child, is indeed a sacred privilege.

Do we need to remind our readers that their visits to the sick should not be prolonged; that the weakness of the patient should temper the remarks they find it necessary to make to him; that the prayer should always be very short; and that the child's mind should be led away from a superstitious trust in the person praying to the God to whom the prayer is addressed?

3. A periodical visitation of all the scholars is greatly to be recommended. The advantages of this practice are manifold. In the first place, the teacher becomes better acquainted with his scholars; he sees their minds in their working dress, and learns their capabilities for other things than religious instruction. On one occasion, a teacher, on visiting a scholar who was a poor ragged boy, found him very busily studying a Latin grammar; the boy afterward

became an accomplished linguist, and rose to a respectable station in society; very little of the mind of such a boy could be known in the school.

Again, the teacher by visitation learns the habits of his children, their temptations, the example, good or bad, they have at home, the business they pursue, and the character of their associates, and is thus enabled to give a more practical character to his Sabbath instructions. Has a child ungodly parents? Is he an orphan? Is he in poverty? Is he proud, or passionate, or addicted to any open vice? An answer to these questions can only be obtained by personal intercourse, and will be of great benefit to the teacher as a guide to the lessons which the child stands most in need of; for we are not to shoot our arrows at a venture; we are not to teach in the dark; we are not to give the same medicine for all diseases; we are to probe the wounds, that we may know how to cure them, and seek out all the peculiarities of the complaint, that the medicine may be intelligently administered.

Again, by visitation a teacher will ascertain what influence his instructions have had on his scholars, and will have an opportunity of renewing them in a more direct and personal manner. A person can know very little of the effect of his lessons by the appearance of his children in the class; those who are most moved, may be the first to forget their impressions, and those who are slowest to show their feelings, may be most deeply excited. A teacher one day, on visiting a scholar who though regular in attendance, and always prepared with her lessons, showed remarkable outward apathy, was surprised and delighted to find that for two long, happy years she had sought and found the Lord. We have known young people who on being spoken to in private, have given vent to long suppressed feelings in a burst of joy or sorrow, and have acknowledged that they had been longing for an opportunity of conversation. Unexpected revelations will sometimes be made in such interviews;

doubts will be mentioned by young girls as to the being of God, or the divinity of Christ, from which we would have imagined their sex, or their age, or their education, should have protected them; and wherever there is real anxiety, the teacher will have a difficult task in meeting these strange forms of unbelief which rise up and darken the view of the cross, and prevent the soul from accepting the mercy which God for Christ's sake has so freely bestowed. We believe that, with scarcely an exception, every child who has enjoyed the instructions of a devoted teacher for any considerable period, will at one time or another be under serious impressions more or less permanent. There can hardly be one person who has read his Bible, or who has heard it expounded, who has not *once* at least had some startling sense of the awful truth that he is a sinner, or that God is just and holy, and will by no means clear the guilty; or who has not realized for a moment the sublime truth of his own immortality, and of the inexpressible glory and happiness of dwelling with God on high. In the case of multitudes this goodness is only temporary, but if watched and nourished it may pass from conviction to conversion and salvation.

The subject however must be approached with the greatest tenderness, and handled with the most scrupulous delicacy. Confidence cannot be forced. It has often happened that a hasty observation upon the apparent piety of a young person has repelled him from all spontaneous communication with his teacher, and even caused him to recoil from the decision he was fast approaching.

In our intercourse with our scholars on the state of their religious feelings, let us beware of fostering religious vanity. A young person will learn to speak of his doubts and darkness, as a sick man of his troubles, till he becomes almost proud of them, and may be tempted to undervalue those whose Christian experience has had more of light and joy. The best way to prevent this error, and at the same time

to arrive at a true knowledge of the quality of a child's religion, is to direct the conversation from the individual to the Bible, or some good work, and to see on the one hand how his religion expresses itself—what estimate it forms of character, or motives, or duties; and on the other hand to watch what fruits it produces: these are two tests far superior to the personal testimony of an individual regarding his own feelings. Any one can express attachment to his relations or his friends—the words of love are easily feigned; but there are a thousand nameless offices of affection where love cannot be counterfeited, and in which the spurious feeling will betray itself in slights and neglects. So when we find a child with a dim sense of the immorality of particular sins; when we discover a feeble response to what is truly noble and holy; when vice excites little horror, and godliness is a something to be praised in set phrases, rather than gloried in with the unforced joy of a warm heart, we may suspect, that if the light of religion is kindled in the soul at all, it yet burns very low.

But whatever be the state of mind in which the teacher finds his scholar, he has a most favorable opportunity of renewing his instructions. We have the child alone, away from the support of his class; we address him as an individual; we tell him that *he* is the sinner who needs forgiveness; that it is *his* soul we are pleading for; that *he* is in the most imminent danger by his delay; and that for *him* there is present and everlasting mercy provided: there is much in this private and personal address which is well calculated to reach the soul, and rivet what had been previously taught; and whoever would do all he can for the salvation of his scholars, will not be slow to adopt some such mode of personal address.

We recommend teachers, while visiting, to make inquiry with regard to the private devotions of children. They should be urged to read a portion of the Bible *every day*, and not to neglect their morning and evening prayers on any

temptation. Every child should be taught to commit a few prayers to memory; it is the first step to induce him to pray for himself.

It has been found useful to invite the children to the teacher's house, to ask them to tea, or to take them to some scientific lecture or interesting exhibition: any plan which brings teachers and scholars together, which develops their minds and cultivates their affections, is to be recommended. It is a very serious fault in a teacher to have a dry manner towards his scholars, to keep them haughtily at a distance, or to pass them in the street as utter strangers. We would have our teachers go out of their way to see a scholar, and, when they meet him, exchange a friendly nod and smile with the youngest, poorest, or most ragged.

A periodical visitation of the scholars is to be recommended, as it engages the sympathies of the parents in favor of the school. The lessons will be better learned, and the attendance more regular, when the teacher has a friend in the mother or father.

Finally, Visitation may be made instrumental in promoting the *temporal* interests of the scholars. A teacher is not stepping out of his way when he procures a situation for his scholar, or gives him his counsel as to his projects in life. The path of Christ Jesus lay through the centre of this world's misery; and as he went, he scattered blessings to the bodies, as well as the souls of men; and he has left us an example that we should walk in his steps.

Of the importance of *prompt visitation* of absentees, the following incident, with which we conclude this chapter, is sufficient evidence:—

One Sabbath evening, (writes a teacher,) on looking over the roll of my class, I found that, among others, Ann —— had to be marked among the absentees. I took a note on my visiting list, intending to call during the week, according to custom; but afterwards, as the girl's house was a *very*

little out of my way, I thought there could be no great harm in delaying my call for a week.

The Sabbath returned again, and I found myself once more in the school with my children around me; and though feeling a *little* uneasiness on seeing that Ann —— was still absent, it soon wore off, and was forgotten in the excitement of teaching. The lessons were concluded, and we were just about to engage in praise, when a neighboring teacher stepped across the floor to me, and said very seriously—

"Have you a girl in your class of the name of Ann ——?"

"Yes; what of that?"

"I have something to tell you about her," said he, hesitating.

"What is it? what is the matter?" said I, with a presentiment of there being something wrong.

"She is dead!"

"Dead?"

"Yes; she died four days ago. She was buried yesterday. Her brother is in my class, and brought word last Sabbath that she was ill, and wished to see you, but I forgot to tell."

"O! if you had only told me!—I wish you had told me."

"I am very, very sorry I did not."

My heart sank within me—I could not speak. Dead!—gone from this world forever—gone from any power or means I could use! Is she saved or lost?—a sinner in hell or a saint in glory? Dead! and I not at her deathbed! Have I done my duty to her?—have I done all I could? Alas! alas! my conscience, now fully aroused, told me I had not. There was no want of time. What I wanted was *inclination.* I felt that I ought to have called *at once,* and then some opportunity would have been afforded me of smoothing the pillow, and speaking peace and comfort to my dying scholar. But now it was too late! The thought was bitter anguish. I knew my duty, but I did it not.

I called on the mourning parents next day. For a few minutes nothing was said. At last I spoke.

"So Ann has gone to her rest."

"Yes, sir," said the mother; "she is gone."

"How did she die?"

"We don't know, sir; we hope she is in heaven."

"Had she much pain?"

"Vera little; she just sleepit awa."

"Was she happy in her mind?"

"We hope sae. She could speak but little for three days before her death."

"I am very sorry I was not here to see her."

"Ay, we thought you might have come," said the mother reproachfully;—"we sent you word, but you didna come. Puir thing! Annie was fond o' the Sabbath class, and would not stay away, wet or dry"—and she burst into tears.

I explained as well as I could why I had not come when sent for, but could not excuse *myself*. Time—means—opportunity—I had neglected them all. And now, why do I write this? It is to urge on my fellow-teachers never to let slight excuses induce them to defer visiting their scholars, and thus they shall not have cause to lament, as I do, *a neglected opportunity*.

It was a Sabbath evening—the teacher's work was done;
To God he breathed his evening prayers, but, for himself alone;
Then lightly laid him down to sleep, "to sleep, but not to rest,"
For dark and troubled visions scared all quiet from his breast.

He thought, he seemed to stand in a dark deserted room;
A feeble flickering taper scarce relieved the cheerless gloom;
Upon a bed—how throbbed his heart—a scholar dying lay,
A girl, long absent, left alone, life ebbing fast away.

Loud roared the angry tempest, and shook the crazy door,
And swept in chilly gusts across the damp, unwashen floor;
And scarce the scanty coverlet could shield her from the blast,
But while the storm was wild without—within, all strife was past.

For smiles of more than earthly joy illum'd her pallid cheek,
And gleams of heavenly rapture told the bliss she could not speak;
And oft, her faltering notes she tuned in praise to God above,
Or sang, how sin is washed away through the Redeemer's love.

At length her teacher's name she called—his heart filled to the brim:
"I know not if he prays for me, but I must pray for him;
"O grant him light to guide his steps, and love to warm his heart,
"And grace to teach souls perishing to choose the better part."

He started from his slumbers—the night was dark and wild;
But, conscience-struck, in haste he sought to see the dying child;
Too late, alas! a stranger hand had closed her fading eye,
And no kind teacher e'er had been to see the orphan die.

ENGLISH AND IRISH SABBATH SCHOOLS.

England has the honor of being the birth-place of the Sabbath school, and to it she owes more, perhaps, than any other nation. The sons of her Sabbath school are to be found in every rank and department of society. Merchants, manufacturers, mechanics, missionaries, and ministers, and many thousands of teachers, revere it as their first guide to salvation. Instead of declining with age, it is growing more vigorous, and scholars are multiplying with the increase of population. Amid so many schools, it was to be expected that there would be considerable diversity of management. The north and south of England, London, and the manufacturing districts, have their own peculiarities. In some schools, writing and arithmetic are (very improperly) taught on Sabbath. In others, one set of teachers attend the morning classes, and a second in the afternoon; and in others, on a plan still worse, two sets teach on alternate months, while again in others we find a very high degree of proficiency. The schools of Ireland exhibit the same diversity. It is not our intention in this chapter to take any further notice of local and temporary peculiarities; we wish to call the attention of our readers for a few moments to the practice of teaching reading in the Sabbath schools in England and Ireland.

1. The want of cheap education in common schools, and other causes, have rendered it necessary to teach reading on Sabbath. It is frightful to contemplate the depth of the ignorance which at this moment would have enveloped the country but for the invention of the Sunday school, and which would soon envelop it, were the teaching of reading on Sabbath suddenly abandoned.

Yet reading can be very imperfectly taught in Sunday schools. Good reading can only be attained by long and and frequent practice, and two hours a-week are quite insufficient for the purpose of teaching it.

2. The teaching of reading in Sunday schools should be regarded as a temporary expedient. The Sabbath school has a far higher end than to teach secular arts. Its principal business is with the soul; and wherever children are taught reading on Sabbath, who could be taught on the week-day, it is a departure from what ought to be its leading object—we are teaching mere reading when we might have been teaching something far higher. It is a good remark, that, "in imitating the *institutions* of our ancestors, we do not always imitate their *spirit*." It was a noble scheme to rescue children from ignorance by teaching them on the Sabbath; but when other means can be found more efficient, we should not cling to a worn-out machinery. The elementary classes of an English Sunday school are not to be made a boast of, but to be lamented as a necessary evil. Were the Sunday school relieved from the drudgery of elementary instruction, it would be enabled to perfect its religious instruction.

We trust that the increased attention which has been devoted to secular education will in the course of a few years render it unnecessary on the Sabbath; in the meantime, we think some steps may be taken to accelerate the change.

SCOTTISH SABBATH SCHOOLS.

The religious education of the people of Scotland is equal, if not superior to that of any other country. For this they are indebted not so much to their Sabbath schools, (though to them they owe much,) as to the general diffusion of common school instruction, to the reading habits of the people, the very general profession of religion, and the attendance on church, and the common, though far from universal, observance of parental instruction. It was the natural consequence of the prevalence of other modes of instruction, that the Sabbath school should not receive the same attention as if it had been the chief means of educating the young. When introduced into Scotland about the year 1790, it was intended, almost exclusively, for the children of ignorant and irreligious parents. It was feared that if the children of church-going parents were permitted to attend Sabbath schools, it would interfere with parental instruction. This prejudice, though not entirely extinct, is greatly on the wane, and the Sabbath school is gradually assuming its proper place among the permanent institutions of the Church. Unfortunately, the effects of the prejudice attending its first formation still adhere to it. It is not supported with sufficient liberality; and instead of being adapted to the ascertained wants of the children, it is conducted too much upon the original, contracted plan, when the destitution was, if not less than it is at present, at least less understood, and the school was regarded as a temporary expedient, or a necessary evil.

There are three changes which might, we think, be made with advantage in the Sabbath schools of Scotland. First, good school-rooms should be provided for the children to meet in; second, the missionary schools should meet twice every Sabbath-day, instead of once; and, thirdly, the schools should be better organized.

1. Good school-rooms ought to be provided. The want of suitable accommodation is felt alike by missionary and congregational Sabbath schools, the discomforts of the place of meeting being often one of the teacher's most serious hindrances.

The majority of Sabbath schools in Scotland meet in churches, where almost every convenience is wanting. Those who have had experience of good school-rooms only, well seated, can have little idea of the inconvenience of being cooped up in the pews of a church.

The small and ill-ventilated rooms in narrow filthy streets, where so many of our missionary schools are to be found, are still more injurious. In summer, a heavy, hot atmosphere oppresses the spirits and exhausts the energies of the teachers; and in winter, the ill-fitted doors and windows are insufficient to exclude the cold.

The expense will be urged as an insurmountable obstacle to building school-rooms. We answer the objection by asking, How does it happen that almost every congregation in England of all denominations, even Scottish congregations there, can provide funds for school-rooms? Many of them have spent £500, or £1000, on schools. They are not more liberal in contributions for other purposes, why should they be so liberal for this? The answer is simply this, that they understand its importance. It is less the poverty of congregations, than their want of interest in the Sabbath school cause, that renders them so reluctant to expend money on Sabbath schools. It is a parsimony extremely ill-judged, for defective accommodation places serious hindrances in the way of the efficiency of the school. A good school-room for children is as necessary as a good church for a congregation; and not until such rooms are provided in sufficient abundance, can the Sabbath schools of Scotland attain to great perfection.

2. Missionary schools should meet *twice* every Sabbath-day. We expressly limit this obligation to missionary

schools; for wherever the children have parental instruction it is unnecessary. By meeting twice a day, their efficiency will be doubled. It is manifestly a most inadequate provision for the ignorance and wickedness of the children of our mission schools, to meet with them for an hour, or an hour and a half weekly. Does it not prove the amazing power of the gospel when instructions so limited, opposed by seven days' bad example, should even in *one* instance prove successful?

It may be thought impossible to procure the attendance of children twice a day. That it is difficult, and that till it gains the force of a custom, there will be much to dishearten those who commence it, we do not question; but in England all the schools meet twice a day, and what can be done there, can be done here. It is also well known that many children are accustomed to attend two different schools on the same Sabbath, which is just an awkward remedy for the school meeting only once.

The impossibility of finding teachers who will come twice to school may be thought fatal to this scheme; but it is well known that a considerable number of Sabbath-school teachers have two schools on the same day, and there is no difference of labor between teaching in two different schools, and teaching twice in the same school; and as the great majority of English teachers meet twice a day, what is possible to them is possible to the teachers of Scotland.

3. The schools should be better organized. Order, arrangement, classification, and discipline, are very imperfectly carried out in many of the Scottish Sabbath schools. We refer our readers for directions on these points to the preceding chapters.

CONGREGATIONAL SABBATH SCHOOLS.

The Sabbath school is an institution for all classes of society, and is equally well adapted to the rich and educated as to the poor and the illiterate. But of the educated classes a small proportion only attend Sabbath school. We design at present to show that it is the duty of the Church to give public religious instruction to her own children, and that the Sabbath school is one of the best means by which this may be effected.

1. The Church is bound to give public religious instruction to her own children, *by the command of Christ and his apostles.* Our Lord said to Peter, "Feed my lambs;" by which is undoubtedly meant the *children* of the Church. The apostle Paul, in his address to the elders of Ephesus, said, "Take heed to *all* the flock;" and *children* form a part of the flock.

2. The church has its duty to perform as well as the parent. Parental instruction is not superseded by public instruction; but neither is public instruction superseded by that of parents. The private responsibility of parents is quite separate from the public reponsibility of the church. The texts above quoted are addressed to the *public teachers* of the Church, and not to private members; so that, although parents were in the habit of teaching their children, the Church is bound to do it also.

3. All parents are not competent to instruct their children. There is a fallacy in the common objection which is still urged against Sabbath schools—"parental instruction is superior to every other kind." If this means that parents can teach their own children better than they can teach the children of strangers, it will be easily admitted; but it is nothing to the purpose. If it mean that every parent, or the generality of parents, can teach their children better than any one else can teach them, then it is not true. Can an

ignorant parent teach his child as well as an intelligent teacher? The mere circumstance of a man becoming a father does not supply all his previous deficiencies. We believe the superiority is all on the other side, and that domestic instruction, as a whole, is behind the teaching of Sabbath schools. Parents read or hear very little about teaching, and are apt to follow to the letter, the system in which they were brought up themselves; but teachers are rapidly improving.

The want of ability in parents to teach *well*, does not in the slightest degree remit the duty of teaching, but it renders more imperative the obligation upon the Church, to provide a higher means of instruction. An uneducated Christian has a positive claim upon the Church for the religious education of his children; he is entitled to say, "I will teach them as well as I can, but I look to the Church for assistance."

Though all parents were competent, all are not faithful to their duty. Does any one suppose that the mass of the people of this country are truly earnest and prayerful in the manner in which they train up their children? There are a number, indeed, who yearn over their children with godly sincerity, but every person knows that, while multitudes omit instruction altogether, a great many more teach in a manner so dull and formal, as to render their instructions nugatory. The ignorance sometimes to be found among the children of church members is very mournful. Now the Church cannot be acquitted of the guilt of these children's ignorance because it holds the theory, that if parents did their duty at home, there would be no need of Sabbath schools. Might we not as well say, if we did our duty to ourselves, there would be no need of ministers? We are to legislate for people as they are, not as they should be. The Church is blamable for the ignorance of her own children until she has used every means in her power, private or public, to remove it. The amount, and

the density of this ignorance, is known to every minister who examines young people before admitting them to the Lord's Table.

5. Parental instruction is incomplete without public instruction. There are certain particulars in which parental teaching excels all other modes of tuition. It can be begun at the very dawn of life; it may be insinuated in a thousand direct and indirect ways; it can be applied when the temptation is present, or the sin is fresh; an accessible moment can be seized when the heart is moved,—and, withal, it drops from the lips of love. But again, there is a life and excitement in public teaching, which are extremely useful. Emulation quickens the intellectual faculties, and the sympathy of numbers is calculated to touch the heart. There is no opposition between Sabbath schools and domestic instruction, and there is enough of time on the Sabbath for both.

Having seen the duty of public instruction, let us now see how much of it lies in the hands of the minister, and how much with the Sabbath school.

1. The minister can preach to children. We believe this duty has been very much overlooked. A fourth or a fifth of the attendance at church is composed of children, yet frequently there is no part of the sermon addressed to them. Is anything better calculated to engender a religion of mere formalism? We think ministers should study the art of addressing the young. Practice will make it easier, as practice has perfected them in other things. A part of every discourse, we think, should either be especially addressed to youth, or should be adapted to their capacity. Occasional sermons for the young should also be preached.

2 The minister can teach the senior classes of the church. Many ministers have large classes of both sexes, either on the Sabbath, or the week-day, and instruct them with great success.

3. Ministers may direct the Sabbath school. The

minister should have nothing to do with the minutiæ of superintendence, but he should take a personal interest in all the operations of the school, be familiar with the teachers and the state of their classes, occasionally examine the classes separately, and address the school; meet with the teachers to examine their lessons, and show them that he has a deep interest in the school, and will aid them in every movement for its improvement. Congregations and Sabbath schools have hitherto stood too much apart.

4. Ministers cannot teach the whole children of the church. No minister who attends to his other duties can be expected to undergo the labor of instructing the children of the congregation class by class. It is here that the Sabbath school steps in to his assistance, and furnishes him with a well-appointed body of teachers, by whom, without cost, and in the most efficient manner, the whole children may be instructed.

In every congregation there are a certain number of members superior to the rest in intelligence, piety, and skill in imparting knowledge. When all the children of the congregation are put under the care of these members, we have the beau ideal of a congregational Sabbath school. What parent should not be eager to embrace its advantages? The deep-toned piety of a godly teacher may prove an everlasting benefit to his children. However far the actual Sabbath school falls short of this beau ideal, its teachers are unquestionably among the best members of the Church. But some one may object, "We doubt if the principle of a Sabbath school for the children of members be a sound one." We reply, that there are thousands of children growing up in the bosom of the Church very imperfectly instructed, and, instead of starting objections to particular schemes, all Christians should be anxious to second the efforts for their improvement. We care nothing for Sabbath schools but as a means of doing good. Teach children in any way, but see to it that they are taught;

save them by any means, but see to it that they are saved.

There are two special reasons for congregational Sabbath schools, which have received but little attention.

1. A large number of the children of church members attend Sabbath schools unconnected with the congregation to which they belong. While congregations have been doubting and hesitating, the work in some measure has been done by strangers. We would be far from wishing to foster that hateful bigotry which grudges to see good done by any but those of one's own church. It is a delightful thing to witness teachers and children of different denominations meeting in harmony. But the most natural place for a child is in a school belonging to his own congregation, superintended by his own pastor.

Were every congregation to establish schools for their own children, we should have at once, perhaps, one-third of the children of England, and two-thirds of the children of Scotland, attending them; and all those teachers who are now engaged in missionary schools, and whose classes are composed as much of the children of church members as of those who are not, would be free to labor among those who are really destitute.

2. The congregational Sabbath school is the only means of reaching the children of the middle and upper classes. They will not attend a general school; but were the influence of the minister and the leading members of the church brought to bear upon them, they would attend a school composed of the children of their own congregation. The experiment has been tried, and has succeeded. Are not the souls of the rich as precious as those of the poor? Shall all our energies be expended upon the destitute poor, and nothing be done for the destitute rich? The whole children of the country, from the lowest to the highest, should be publicly taught by the Church of Christ.

HOME MISSIONARY SCHOOLS.*

No kind of school requires to be planned with more deliberate care, or conducted with more spirit and tact, than a home missionary school. It possesses few natural attractions to those for whom it is designed, and it is composed of very combustible materials, which the slightest spark may inflame. Constraint, obedience, and order are very foreign to the habits of the children attending it. It is like a territory reclaimed from the sea, round which the waves still surge, seeking entrance by some unguarded spot.

The class of children for whom the mission school is intended are the outcasts of society, whose parents are openly wicked—the children of the drunkard and the thief. They are for those who are too ignorant or too wicked to make it expedient to introduce them into a congregational school. Except in small towns, and villages, where all the children are acquainted with each other, and mix familiarly during the week, a separation should always be made between those who are well-educated and those whose habits are vicious. There is a double propriety in it, for a well-dressed child will be tempted to look down upon his ragged class-mate, and a natural shame will deter the very poor child from displaying his tattered garments to superior company; and it is running too great a risk to place a well-trained child near the contaminating influence of those who are familiar with evil.

There are two peculiarities in missionary schools which must receive due attention before they can be efficiently wrought. 1. They must be aggressive in their character. They do not wait for scholars—they seek them; they bring

* It will be seen that this chapter is adapted to a state of things less common in this country than in Europe. Nevertheless we insert it entire, knowing that with the increase of population, particularly in our large towns, we are rapidly approaching the moral and social condition of the Old World.—Ed.

the gospel to their very threshold, and compel them to come in. 2. The teachers of these schools must accommodate themselves to the wants of the children they mean to reclaim. The deepest poverty must not be despised; the darkest ignorance must not be despaired of; nor the most desperate wickedness be deemed irreclaimable. Like the Saviour, the missionary teacher is to seek the *lost*. It is with our eye on these two great features of the missionary school that the subsequent directions are given.

Missionary Sabbath schools are commenced either under the auspices of a congregation, or through the zeal of private Christians. When they are organized under the care of a congregation, they are relieved of many of the difficulties which beset them. The burden of pecuniary support is at once transferred from the anxious teachers to the congregation; the congregation is a reservoir from which to draw a supply of teachers as they are needed; the sympathy and prayers of the congregation are with them; and schemes of a more comprehensive character can be devised than is usually within the power of individual enterprise. Indeed, were the Church in a healthy condition, little would be left to individuals. Individual zeal, instead of being obliged to force an opening for itself, would always be provided with an appropriate sphere of labor, and "the sacramental host of God's elect, instead of issuing forth in scattered and disunited bands, would march onward to victory, a serried phalanx which nothing could withstand."

To show how efficiently a congregation may carry on a scheme of missionary operations, we shall give a brief description of the mode now adopted by some of the congregations in the large towns.

1. A district of the town, of limited extent, where religious destitution abounds, is first selected. It may contain from 300 to 500 families. It is unwise to make it so large as to prevent the missionary from visiting every family once a month.

2. A home missionary is appointed to the station. His salary may amount to from $200 to $350 a year; the last sum should be reached, if possible. His duties are—(1.) To visit all the families periodically—read the Bible, and converse with them—leave a tract—and endeavor to bring them to a church, or to the meeting held in the district. (2.) To visit the sick. (3.) To send the children to the missionary day and Sabbath school established in the district. (4.) To establish weekly meetings, where addresses shall be given by himself, or some other competent person. (5.) To make an annual religious and educational statistical report of his district.

3. Christian instruction agents, under the direction of the missionary, occupy a subdivision of the district, and are expected to visit those under their care once a month. Their duties are the same as those of the missionary.

4. A clothing society, judiciously managed, may be introduced into the plan.

5. A week-day school, under an efficient salaried teacher, is the next feature of the scheme. It is confined to the children of the district, but is not entirely gratuitous. In Dr. Chalmers' mission-school, West Port, Edinburgh, the charge is from a penny to twopence weekly. The amount thus collected will lessen the expense by a third or a half. Where the poverty of the parents renders them unable to pay this small sum, they are admitted free. A sewing school should be added for the girls.

6. A Sabbath school for all the uninstructed children of the district completes the scheme. These different agencies will be found to work well together. The schools are filled through the visitations of the missionary and the Christian instruction agents; the week-day school relieves the Sabbath school from the drudgery of teaching reading; and the Sabbath school, by dividing the children into small classes, provides a more thorough religious education for them than can be given during the week. Were this machinery ap-

plied on a sufficiently extensive scale it would leave little to be desired.

Leaving this more extended scheme, let us now turn to the organization and management of a common missionary Sabbath-school.

1. The teachers. The teachers who undertake to establish a missionary school, ought, if possible, to have some experience in teaching. Let them learn to row a little in the still waters of a well-ordered school before facing the tempest in a missionary school: at all events they must be persons of nerve, thoroughly in earnest, and prepared to make considerable sacrifices. Very young teachers, teachers of an easy disposition of whom the scholars will not stand in awe, persons who either refuse or neglect to visit absent scholars, or who on slight grounds are frequently absent, are not suitable. We have seen a boy of fifteen or sixteen surrounded by a group of children nearly as tall as himself, doing his best to benefit them, but paralyzed amid a tempest of disorder he was unable to control. Let the teachers who commence the school, be more anxious about the quality of their assistants than their number; its prosperity will be periled by the choice of unfit agents. "You must rather," says Lord Bacon, "leave the ark to shake as it shall please God, than put unworthy hands to hold it up." When the missionary school has been in operation for some time, it may become almost as manageable as any other school.

2. We recommend the choice of a small district out of which the children are to be drawn, rather than the opening of a school for indiscriminate admission; it is the most systematic mode of extending missionary operations; it gives the teachers a definite amount of work for which they are responsible, and it enables them to do their work far more thoroughly, and to reach the lowest strata of society, for which the school is principally established. The labor of visiting will also be very much lessened.

3. The school should be placed in the district selected, or as near to it as possible; scarcely any advantages of situation or accommodation will compensate for the school being at a distance from the district. It was to meet the reluctance of children to go far to school that *Local Schools* were instituted. A small district containing from twenty to fifty children is selected; these children are gathered into a room in the district, either all at one time or at different hours, and are taught by one teacher. The advantages of this system are that, the district being so limited, the teacher obtains a thorough acquaintance with its character and wants, and is able to reach every child with very little trouble. To balance these merits there are very serious drawbacks. *Classification*, so essential to good teaching, is nearly impossible; and the solitary labors of the teacher among wicked children demand a strength of resolution which few possess. It is found that the change of teachers in such schools is very great.

4. The district should be thoroughly canvassed for scholars. Every house must be visited, the names of all the children who attend no school noted down, and repeated visits made, if necessary, to bring them out. Of the spirit with which this canvass should be conducted, we have an amusing example in the case of a city missionary. He had obtained the consent of a woman to her boy's going to a week-day school; on the day appointed the boy did not make his appearance; he called again, some trifling excuse was made, and a promise again obtained, but broken in a similar manner; a third time he went to see her, she saw him coming up the close, and barred her door against him. He, not to be balked, sauntered away till he thought she would be off her guard, and, then returning, got to the door before she saw him; but hearing his footsteps, she crept below the bed; from this he soon dislodged her by informing her that he knew where she was, and that he was determined not to leave without taking the boy with him. He gained his point.

The canvass will require to be repeated at intervals, as there is a frequent change of residence among the poor.

In conducting the canvass, scrupulous care should be taken not to interfere with children attending other schools.

5. The classes should be small; four or five scholars are enough to begin with in each. It is nearly impossible for one teacher to manage a large number of children who perhaps never knew what it was to obey a command since they were capable of disobedience; from neglecting this necessary rule a number of schools are almost useless. Of the scenes which this neglect produces, the following is a specimen:—A teacher who had a large school under his sole charge, had been very much annoyed by the unruly conduct of his scholars, and had given them a very solemn rebuke before prayer. While praying they seemed to be very quiet, and the good man was tempted to be somewhat lengthened with his devotions; when he opened his eyes, he found himself in darkness, and that all the children had silently slipped out of the school.

The common excuse for large classes is the scarcity of teachers. Persons say that they have not the *heart* to exclude a single scholar who is willing to come in: there is more good feeling than wisdom in this saying. A large disorderly school will soon fall to pieces; whereas a small school, thoroughly disciplined, has such a healthy root that it may increase indefinitely. Besides, far more children receive instruction in a small orderly school, than in a large one where the children are unruly. We would have the teachers of a new missionary school to be very rigid in enforcing this rule. As the school becomes orderly additional scholars may be taken in, and the classes greatly enlarged.

6. Order should be rigidly maintained. We do not look for great order in a new school for several weeks or months after its formation; but Sabbath after Sabbath may one rule after another be fully established, and one and another scholar subdued, till the change is complete. Everything

depends on the teachers. We have seen two schools, composed of the same class of children—the one a Babel of noise, and the other perfectly quiet. While, therefore, we must be prepared, in the first instance, to meet with great insolence and insubordination, we may calculate, in the course of a few weeks, by good management, on a regularity, peace, and attention, which at the opening of the school seemed impossible.

7. Visitation of absentees is altogether indispensable. A teacher who does not visit his scholars need not expect to have the same class on two successive Sabbaths; if frequently absent himself, he will soon have no class at all. The absentees at first will probably equal those who attend, and for several weeks or months the deficiency may continue; but patience and perseverance will finally succeed in retaining a class.

8. The children should be provided with suitable school books. A supply of Bibles and Testaments for those who have none should be kept in the school-room. But all the children should be encouraged to procure Bibles for themselves. It would be easy to present them with copies, but they will neither be so much prized nor so well preserved as if the children purchase them with their own savings.

9. A week-evening class for reading, writing, arithmetic, music, and sewing, should be attached to every considerable missionary school. Many who can read are unable to write, and many who can read the Bible cannot read any other book. It will fit the children for more extensive usefulness if they gain some acquaintance with different branches of secular knowledge, and it will qualify them for a higher style of religious instruction. A teacher informed us, that, having opened such a class about Midsummer, he promised a New Testament to all who could read it before the New-Year; the boys entered into the proposal with great spirit, and every one in the school earned a New Testament. These week-evening schools are already numerous and

successful, but they might be multiplied with great advantage.

10. Some care ought to be taken of the children's personal appearance. They may at least be made to keep their faces and hands clean, and their hair smoothed. Rags we may not be able to banish altogether, but when the children have become attached to the school, they may be taught to come a little more tidy.

11. The children should be taught politeness. They may easily learn to say Sir, and Ma'am, instead of Eh? or What? and to say, If you please, or, I will thank you, instead of making a blunt request. In some schools the children, instead of Sir, and Ma'am, use the word "teacher." It can only be adopted in the younger classes.

12. A sick and clothing society, and a savings' fund, are useful in a missionary school.

Finally, be instant, both in season, and out of season. Remember how short a time children remain at the missionary school, and choose for them only the most important lessons. Remember what an example they have at home, and set Christ before them in all his forgiving love, and unwearying care; and remember that a tempest of sinful passions is already raging in their hearts, and that you must speak loud and plain if you would be heard.

We shall conclude this chapter with some observations on the duty of the Church towards the destitute population of this country.

1. We shall consider the attendance on the Sabbath-schools. The attendance varies in different quarters. In London it is scarcely a third of the children between the years of five and fifteen; in the manufacturing districts it is about two-thirds; and, in a few towns, it is even higher. We may remark, that as the number of children is always about one-fifth of the whole population, when the proportion at school is ascertained, it is easy to calculate the number who are neglected. In Scotland, the average of attend-

ance is rather more than one-third, and it is on the increase. Five years ago Edinburgh had only one-third of its population at Sabbath school—there is now more than a half. In Glasgow, Dundee, Greenock, and Dumfries, the proportion is about one-third. In Paisley, Ayr, Arbroath, and Aberdeen, it is about two-thirds. In some country districts the attendance is very limited. On the whole, we may estimate that not more than one-half of the children of Great Britain are regularly attending Sabbath school. In Ireland there are about 250,000, out of one million and a half of children, at Protestant Sabbath schools. The number of teachers has been estimated at about 200,000, or 250,000 in England, above 25,000 in Scotland, and 25,000 in Ireland. Whilst there is much to encourage in these statistics, there is also matter of very grave reflection. From the large number not in attendance at school, we may deduct a considerable proportion for those who receive instruction at home, but having made sufficient allowance for these cases, we believe that 200,000 children in London, in Glasgow 20,000, and throughout the kingdom generally, one-third of its youth are neither taught at home, nor reap any direct advantage from the Sabbath school.

2. Let us look now at the religious habits of the adult population. We question if more than a third of the people in England are in the habit of frequenting a place of worship. We have visited several towns where there was not a fourth part accustomed to hear the gospel. In Scotland more than two-thirds of the people attend church. It appears from this, that there are many millions in England, and about one million in Scotland, who neglect the ordinances of religion. The small number of home missionaries who are laboring among them reach a very small number of this vast multitude.

3. The ignorance of children and adults is very great. We recounted the story of Christ's life, at a meeting in Manchester, to some females, to whom it was entirely new. Twenty

girls in one mill in Glasgow were found ignorant of the name and character of Jesus Christ. We have repeatedly found children, from six to ten years of age, who did not know who it was that made them. A teacher in Edinburgh asked a young woman if she had heard of heaven? she said she did not remember. Had she heard of hell? Yes. Did she know who Jesus Christ was? No. She was quite sure she did not know that word. Had she heard of God? Yes; she had heard people swearing by God. These specimens might be multiplied to any extent.

4. The crime consequent on such a mass of ignorance is very great. Whether the wickedness of the present age is less or more than it was in previous periods of our history, we shall not take it upon ourselves to determine. It is enough that crimes of the deepest dye cry loudly for the only cure which can be applied to them. Legal enactments and penalties cannot reach the sources of our drunkenness, debauchery, theft, and robbery; the gospel, applied by Christian instrumentality, is the only remedy for these evils. Every crime that we read of in the newspapers—every prison with its iron bars and massive gates—every transport-ship that spreads its sails to a land of exile—is a fresh call on the Church to save our country from crime.

5. The Church, *in its present condition,* is able to instruct the whole destitute population. One great cause of the ignorance of the people is the sloth of the Church. Were all our congregations acting vigorously, every child in the three kingdoms, in the course of a very few years, would be receiving religious instruction. In Scotland, where the attendance on church is so large, if *one* member out of every *ten*—that is, fifty out of every five hundred—were to become Sabbath-school teachers, we should have enough for the whole of Scotland. This proportion may very easily be realized. In one congregation in England, out of 260 members we found that 60 were Sabbath-school teachers; in another in Scotland, out of 500 members 90 were teachers;

in one in Ireland, out of 800 members 160 were teachers. If all the congregations in the country were to act in the same spirit, a complete revolution would be effected in its religious condition. We do not expect every member of the Church to become a teacher; but it is surely not asking too much that ten or fifteen out of every hundred who have professed their faith in Christ shall engage to lead the children of the land to his cross.

There is a great want of faith on the part of the Church in the omnipotence of the gospel. Upon the minds of many there is an impression that ignorance, vice, and crime are inevitable. Now, if the gospel of Jesus Christ is not adapted to the most degraded victims of vice—if it cannot elevate the lowest classes of society, and purify the very fountains of corruption, it is not what it professes to be; it is not a gospel for every creature. It has failed hitherto, merely because it has not been applied with sufficient consistency, perseverance, and faith. As it has converted nations from heathenism to Christianity, so it can convert the whole mass of society from formalism or irreligion to vital godliness.

Let us suppose that every child in Great Britain, from the age of four years and upwards, were under suitable religious instruction for the next twenty years, and that during this period every means should be tried to train these children in the paths of holiness, there would be a most surprising change effected in the face of society; difficulties would disappear year by year, encouragements would multiply, and a race of Christians would arise who should bear the name of Christ to the ends of the earth. There is nothing wanting to make this picture a reality but more zeal and love in the Church. We require no new machinery, and no new gospel. We have enough of money for all our expenses, without burdening a single congregation; and members enough to teach every child, had they only the will to obey their Saviour's commands for the instruction of the world.

If we were under the necessity of making a comparison

of the different missions of the Church, we should have little hesitation in placing the Sabbath-school, and its kindred society, the home mission, in the first rank. The destitute population, in Great Britain alone, is equal, perhaps, to the whole attendance in all the foreign missionary stations throughout the world. There are three hundred thousand teachers employed in our schools. The influence of an individual for good or evil in this country, is greatly superior to the influence of an African or an Indian. This is a work in which all may be actively employed; there is no stormy sea to cross—no foreign tongue to learn; the children are of our own country; the same blood runs in their veins; they speak our mother-tongue; they are here, playing in our streets, running on our errands, crossing our path wherever we go, and all the while they are perishing for lack of knowledge. Yet what a small space does the home mission occupy in the public eye, compared with the foreign mission! How few prayers, comparatively, arise in our Churches and families for the Sabbath-school, and Sabbath-school teachers!

These children cannot speak for themselves; let us speak in their name; let us ask if another generation is to live and perish through the neglect of their brethren. Can the Church be aware that in Scotland one hundred and fifty thousand children, in Ireland one million, and in England a million more, rose last Sabbath morning, and lay down at night, without its once being said to any of them, There is a God, there is a hereafter, Jesus Christ died for sinners?

The idea is entertained that this neglect cannot be very injurious, since they are only children. Children!—See that boy whom the Church is neglecting to teach: the boy becomes a lad, and the lad becomes a man; and who fill our gin-shops and our taverns? who crowd our police-offices and our bridewells, our prisons and our Botany Bays? who fill the gloomy mansions of despair? Who—but those same boys whom the Church neglected to instruct? See, also, that little girl playing so innocently that you stop to watch

her mirth. She, too, grows up untaught, a heathen mother of heathen children; or becomes, perhaps, the greatest pest of society. What shall be inscribed over her grave? "HERE LIES ANOTHER VICTIM OF THE CHURCH'S NEGLECT."

Christians! "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" The temporal wretchedness of these children is great; but the essence of their misery is this, that they are "without Christ, without God, and without hope." Could a stamp be placed on the brow of every child, how many would have this terrible brand on theirs, "I am on the way to woe!" Will the Church—will Christians not rise as one man to redeem them from destruction? Think, reader, how this epitaph would read upon your tombstone, "Here lies a Christian who never tried to save a soul." Two millions and a half of our own children cry day and night for salvation: have pity on them, for without Christ they will become stranded vessels on the stream of time, a peril to others, and ruined themselves. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." May God, who is the Lord of the harvest, send forth laborers into his harvest!

In this work we have addressed our readers as if they were all Christians, but some of them may be entire strangers to the truth. Some of our readers, last Sabbath, may have spoken to their children about a God they do not love, and a Saviour in whom they do not believe; they may have described the happiness of a heaven which there appears no prospect of their ever seeing, and they may have even conversed about hell, with coldness and indifference, while they themselves were nearing its awful verge. O! it might make the angels weep, to see men, like torches, burning away in giving light to others. Reader, it is not too late to repent.

THE END.

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.